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Buffy, Vampire Slayer

David Boreanaz and Sarah Michelle Gellar,
making Bram Stoker hip for a new generation

STEPHEN KING'S
STORM OF THE CENTURY
THE GREEN MILE
MY FAVORITE MARTIAN
TOTAL RECALL
TEXAS BLOOD MONEY
FROM DUSK
TILL DAWN II

Volume 31 Number 3



CINEFANTASTIQUE

GEORGE LUCAS STAR WARS MOGUL



THE 50 MOST POWERFUL IN SCIENCE FICTION

THE REVIEW OF HORROR FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, YOUR GENRE NEWS MONTHLY

Don't miss our next exciting cover story on George Lucas, STAR WARS mogul, including a peek at his new entry in the series, STAR WARS: THE PHANTOM EMPIRE. Lucas heads the list of The 50 Most Powerful People in Science Fiction, our annual survey of the most important and influential creators working in science fiction, fantasy and horror—the reigning genres at the boxoffice these days. And in keeping with the Academy Award season, we'll be taking a look at what determines the pecking order: the best and worst of last year's film, television and video efforts, along with our picks for the Oscars.

And also in the same issue, our exclusive on the set report of the filming of MATRIX in Australia, the futuristic science fiction epic from Larry and Andy Wachowski, the directors of BOUND, including an interview with star Laurence Fishburne. Plus previews of TALOS, THE MUMMY, director Russell Mulcahy's monster picture that is poised to steal the thunder of Universal's big-budget summer remake, Stephen King sequel CARRIE II, and THE 13TH FLOOR, science fiction from producer Roland Emmerich.

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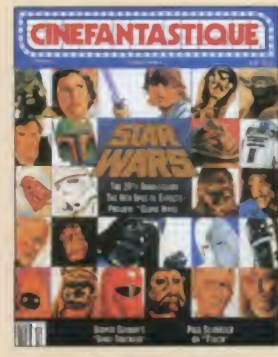
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"The Magazine with a Sense of Wonder"

MARCH 1999

Increasingly, TV seems to be where the action is for fans of horror, fantasy and science fiction. There's more than even the most ardent fan can watch, or sometimes even sample. I'm not complaining—it's an embarrassment of riches. Like everything, the gems are few and far between, but because there's so much out there, there's also more quality work worthy of our attention.

It wasn't planned to make this cover story on the WB's *BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*—our second annual look at the show—an all-TV issue. It just turned out that way. This is the slow season for movies, but on television it's the front-loaded, pull-out-your-big-guns race to win the February ratings sweeps. And on ABC that means it's time for Stephen King, who has been a big ratings winner for the network in past sweeps periods. Toronto correspondent Paul Wardle provides our on-the-set report of the filming of King's *STORM OF THE CENTURY*, which ABC telecasts over three nights beginning February 14.

Then there's preview coverage of two promising new cable series set to debut in March. The Sci-Fi Channel will offer an alien invasion show with a sexy slant, *THE FIRST WAVE*, created by Chris Brancato, *THE X-FILES* writer who also penned *SPECIES II*. And Showtime will debut *TOTAL RECALL*, based on the work of celebrated author Philip K. Dick, on March 14. The writer-producers promise something more along the lines of the Dick-inspired *BLADE RUNNER* than the mindless Schwarzenegger action format of the movie version. At least their heart's in the right place.

Even our movie coverage this issue has a television pedigree, with a look at the making of *MY FAVORITE MARTIAN*, Disney's big-budget bid to make a film franchise out of the '60s TV sitcom starring Ray Walston. *BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER* scored a success in the other direction, becoming a hit on TV after debuting mostly unnoticed on movie screens. Who knows, in the next millennium George Lucas might even find a place on the tube for *STAR WARS!*

Frederick S. Clarke



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UNWRAPPING SOON

THE MUMMY (Universal)

The great "also-ran" in the Universal monster movie horse race (after Dracula, Frankenstein, and the Wolfman), is dusted off and unwrapped for the '90s. Stephen Sommers (DEEP RISING) wrote and directed the long-in-development project, which at one time or another has involved talents as diverse as Clive Barker, George Romero, and Joe Dante. Brendan Fraser (GODS AND MONSTERS) plays the male lead, with Arnold Vosloo (the DARKMAN DTV sequels) filling the bandages. The plot harkens back more to the original Boris Karloff film directed by Karl Freund, with Vosloo as the reawakened Imhotep trying to revive his lost love Princess Anckes-en-Amon. As for the shuffling, bandaged wrap version of the Mummy (which really didn't become popularized until Universal's 1940s' sequels), producer Jim Jacks said, "We do have bandaged mummies in our film, but it's an army of guys that come to help Imhotep in the end."

Joe Fordham

May 7



RELEASE SCHEDULE

Upcoming cinefantastique at a glance, along with a word or two for the discriminating viewer.

compiled by Jay Stevenson
(unless otherwise noted)



BLAST FROM THE PAST (New Line)

February 12

Brendan Fraser, Alicia Silverstone, Christopher Walken, and Sissy Spacek star in this comedy about a young man (Fraser) who has spent his entire life in an atomic bomb shelter, only to emerge after 30 years into a world completely unfamiliar to him. Hugh Wilson directed, from a script he co-wrote with Bill Kelly.

BABY GENIUSES (Columbia)

March 26

You've been waiting with breathless anticipation since the April release date announced in *CFQ* 29:12 failed to materialize. You thought the wait would be over January 22 (the subsequently announced release date). But no, you have to wait until March 26 for the film finally to come out. SEE *CFQ* 31:1-2

CARRIE 2 (UA)

March 12

This film was almost set to open on January 15—until United Artists saw the box office receipts for HALLOWEEN H20 and decided they had another potential teen terror summer blockbuster on their hands. Then, after pushing the debut back to the Fourth of July, they changed their mind again, because SUPERNOVA had been moved from its Spring debut, leaving an opening in the studio's release schedule. Despite the title, don't expect to see Sissy Spacek return in this sequel to the teen-terror hit of 1976. Instead, Carrie White's telekinetic powers have been genetical-

ly inherited by another member of the family, Rachel (Emily Bergl). Amy Irving reprises her role from the original. Katt Shea directed, from a script by Rafael Moreu. SEE *CFQ* 30:12

DEEP END OF THE OCEAN (Columbia)

February 26

The studio is being cagey about whether this kidnapping drama, starring Michelle Pfeiffer, Treat Williams, and Whoopi Goldberg, has any genre elements. All they're saying is that the story (written by Stephen Schiff and directed by Ulu Grosbard) details what happens to the family when their tragedy is "mysteriously and miraculously" overturned. The film was originally supposed to open at the end of last year (i.e., Oscar season) but instead was pushed back to this less competitive season. Should we take a hint?



8MM (Columbia)

February 5

Pushed up a week from its previously announced debut, this film brings another urban horror legend to the big screen. Joel Schumacher (BATMAN AND ROBIN) directed screenwriter Andrew Kevin Walker's follow-up to SEVEN, with Nicholas Cage as a private eye hired by a widow who has found a sordid 8mm film among her late husband's effects that apparently portrays an actual murder staged specifically for the camera. Cage must track down the source of this "snuff" film to see whether it is in fact the real thing. SEE PAGE 44.

MY FAVORITE MARTIAN (BV)

February 12

In this update of the TV show, reporter Tim O'Hara (Jeff Daniels) stumbles upon a Martian (Christopher Lloyd) whose spaceship has crash-landed on Earth. Elizabeth Hurley, Daryl Hannah, and Wallace Shawn co-star for director Donald Petrie, working from a script by Deanna Oliver, Sherri Stoner, and Mark Steven Johnson. SEE PAGE 46.

WING COMMANDER (Fox) March 26

Chris Roberts, creator of the Wing Commander video games, directs the film version, starring Freddie Prinze, Jr. and Saffron Burrows. The STAR WAR-type story, based on the first game, follows a young pilot fresh from the Academy, fighting to repel an alien invasion.

Anthony Montesano



THE WONDERFUL ICE CREAM SUIT (Buena Vista Video) March 16

Director Stuart Gordon's filmization of Ray Bradbury's short story (adapted by the author) reaches video shelves. Joe Mantegna and Edward James Olmos star. SEE *CFQ* 29:12:10.

UNWRAPPING SOONER

TALOS THE MUMMY (Miramax)

Director Russell Mulcahy's \$10-million homage to Hammer films and Ray Harryhausen beats Universal's remake to American screens, courtesy of Miramax. Jason Scott Lee and Sean Pertwee (both last seen in SOLDIER) star, along with Lysette Anthony (DARK SHADOWS), Honor Blackman (GOLDFINGER), Shelley Duval (THE SHINING), and Christopher Lee (Hammer's first and best THE MUMMY). This revised take on the classic monster—scripted by Mulcahy, Keith Williams and John Esposito—includes many classic elements such as reincarnation, archeology and ancient curses; however, the threat is no longer a bandaged corpse but the bandages themselves—an evil force capable of assuming many different forms, including a humanoid juggernaut reminiscent of Lee's powerhouse Mummy. KNB handled the makeup effects. SEE *CFQ* 30:5/6

April 2

HOLLYWOOD GOTHIC

LOST SOULS

Supernatural conspiracy thriller.

by Doug Eby

LOST SOULS, the New Line supernatural thriller to be released in the Fall of 1999, stars Winona Ryder and Ben Chaplin, and concerns a young woman, Maya Larkin who becomes aware of a conspiracy to enable the devil to take human form. Chaplin (THE THIN RED LINE) plays Peter Kelson, a successful New York crime journalist who gets involved, along with his girlfriend, played by Sarah Wynter (SPECIES II). The film is the directorial debut for Oscar-winning cinematographer Janusz Kaminski (SCHINDLER'S LIST, SAVING PRIVATE RYAN), and is being produced by Prufrock Pictures' Meg Ryan and Nina Sadowsky, along with Betsy Stahl and Pierce Gardner, who co-wrote the script. According to production notes, the story opens with an inmate psychopath requesting an exorcism, which is performed by Father Lareaux (John Hurt), but results in emotional and physical harm to the priest. Larkin (Ryder), a teacher at a Catholic school, has attended the rite, and later decodes a message given her by the inmate that Kelson is the target of the conspiracy. Although raised by his uncle, a priest, (Philip Baker Hall), Kelson is a confirmed non-believer, tied to his rational logic.

Screenwriter Gardner notes that this conflict between faith and reason is one of the film's central themes: "The movie is about a woman of great faith who believes



Winona Ryder (seen in a spooky pose from BEETLEJUICE) stars as a Catholic school teacher who becomes aware of a satanic conspiracy in LOST SOULS.

something completely—something ostensibly preposterous but which in her mind is absolutely possible—and a man of no faith who doesn't believe anything but develops such a deep respect for her commitment to her faith that he entrusts his life to her." Gardner and his writing partner Stahl based their story on a number of sources, including the writings of M. Scott Peck (especially "People of the Lie") and a Jesuit book on exorcism. Stahl commented that personally she was much more like the Kelson character, but that in doing research "began to

believe in the possibility of a supernatural world." Gardner notes "There was a quote on the script from C.S. Lewis saying that there is no neutral ground in the universe, every split second and every square inch is contested by God, and counter-claimed by Satan. And I would sit in church and think 'There's something going on here, but is it really about whether we eat meat on Friday?' This movie is really about what fun it would be for a man who's walking around in the realm of the real world, to find himself unwillingly examining that, and to be with a person who is going to show him this deeper reality, that he didn't even know existed, and doesn't even want to spend a split second inside of." He says the first two-thirds of the movie will have "These disquieting, supernatural incidents that, for your readers, will be a lot of fun. Little moments where reality kind of slips, and things happen that bend the rules a bit." Director Kaminski commented in the production notes that he was drawn to the story as a "strong character piece which allows for examination of the nature of faith in our society, while still providing exhilarating thrills."

MORE

by Steve Biodrowski

Having completed an Oscar-qualifying run at the California Science Center's IMAX theatre in Los Angeles, Mark Osbourne's short subject masterpiece MORE (reviewed in CFQ 31:1-2) is now looking for wider distribution. The 70mm IMAX print will screen at other IMAX theatres around the country, while it is hoped that a 35mm print will be teamed with a feature-length film for screenings in regular theatres.

Osbourne's sad-eyed stop-motion story, set to the melancholy strains of New Order's "Elegia," wowed audiences at its debut on the giant screen—an experience that the gratified writer-director, coming off the rush of enthusiasm he had received, could only term "weird." Osbourne (who previously has directed mostly television commercials and station i.d. spots) conceptualized the tale while teaching at his alma mater, Cal Arts.

"When I first started coming up with ideas, I just put on that New Order song in my car, and I got all of these images, without really knowing what they meant: the merry-go-round and this monotonous cityscape and a factory. The basic structure unfolded as I listened to the song," he recalled. "I didn't really realize where the images were coming from until later on, but I was jealous of these kids who didn't have a care in the world and were basically there doing whatever they wanted to do, and I was trying to tell them to really take advantage of it, because I knew too many people in school when I was there who were just worried about getting a job, and when they left, they pined for not being able to do their own work. At the same time, it was based on my recent past, working day in and day out for the Man. Even though I was still doing something creative, there was a lot of pressure to be always dealing with clients. And I had a certain amount of reaction to looking at my life and thinking, 'Am I going to continue doing these commercials, or am I going to try to do something bigger?'"

"Bigger" may not be literally the right word for a film that runs only six minutes; /continued on next page

Short Notes

Arnold Schwarzenegger and James Cameron have agreed to reteam for another TERMINATOR sequel. Cameron will write, produce and possibly direct. Having previously sworn off the project, Cameron changed his mind after Andy Vajna and Mario Kassar (toppers of the now-defunct Carolco, which produced T-2) sold off their rights in the franchise to 20th Century Fox, the studio that backed Cameron throughout the budget overruns on TITANIC. ☺ George Lucas has announced that the second and third STAR WARS prequels will film at Rupert Murdoch's Fox Studios in Australia. With start dates in 2000 and 2003, the combined budgets for the two films should total \$240-million ☺ Director Alfonso Arau is planning to direct TO CATCH A FALLING STAR from a script by Michael Cohn about a mysterious man with a magical gift. The film's mixture of romance and magic realism is expected to recall Arau's excellent LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE. □

RONIN

Independent auteur Darren Aronofsky slices a piece of the Hollywood pie.

by David Hughes

After the astonishing success of Darren Aronofsky's \$60,000 marvel π —which has earned approximately \$3.141596 million in the US—it was perhaps inevitable that the 30-year-old writer-director would foster a fair number of development deals around Hollywood. It should also come as no surprise to those who have seen Aronofsky's own adaptation of π into comic book form (published by Artisan Entertainment/Dark Horse, with art by Edward Ross Flynn) that his first project should be based on a graphic novel: Frank Miller's RONIN.

Described by the author as "a superhero-science fiction-samurai drama-urban-nightmare-gothic-romance," RONIN was first published as a six-part mini-series in 1983-4, three years before Miller's seminal graphic novel, BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS redefined the medium, inspiring the dark undertones of Tim Burton's BATMAN. The story concerned a 13th-century Samurai who, upon the death of his master, finds himself flung forward into the far future: New York City, circa 2030 AD. There, inhabiting the body of a limbless boy genius connected to a



Frank Miller's *Ronin* is under development as the big-budget Hollywood debut of Aronofsky.

gigantic bio-computer, the 'Ronin' ('master-less samurai') is granted a second chance for vengeance against the vicious demon who murdered his master.

Although the idea of a film based on RONIN has been mooted for almost a decade, Aronofsky said there has been little development, "not even a script—probably because no-one could figure out an angle. But Frank and I have been working on it, and I think we're pret-

ty close to cracking the nut. It's still going to be a 13th century Samurai transported to 21st century New York, but it's a very complex comic book, and we've had to simplify it and do some re-inventing."

Before Aronofsky could tackle the problem of how to re-create Miller's Dystopian landscapes on film—not to mention finding a star of sufficient stature who looks Japanese and has fewer lines than Arnie in THE TERMINATOR—he had other, more pedestrian, obstacles to overcome. "I went to Warner Bros because RONIN is a DC Comic, and DC is owned by Warners," he explained. "But there was no interest from any of their producers, and I couldn't get it away from them, because there's a rule that [says] you can't develop a property somewhere else. "However," he added, "I had a good relationship with New Line, and they're owned by Time-Warner, so for the first time in history, we got Warner Bros. and New Line working together on a joint venture. So, hopefully, it's going to happen." How about the fact that the name RONIN is now associated with John Frankenheimer's mercenary movie? "I know—they stole my title," he growled. "But we'll figure out something better..."

Meanwhile, as Miller toils on the script—his third, after the critically derided scripts for ROBOCOP 2 and 3—Aronofsky will be busy preparing several other post- π projects, including an adaptation of REQUIEM FOR A DREAM, a novel by Hubert Selby Jr. (LAST EXIT TO BROOKLYN), and PROTEUS, a sci-fi/horror film set on a submarine during World War 2, and described by Aronofsky as "DAS BOOT meets THE SHINING." There have also been rumors that a major studio has commissioned Aronofsky to develop a feature film with series potential for its fledgling animation division. "Something's coming," he smiled. "It's too early to talk about it yet, but—yes—I'm pursuing the idea of adult animation. Talk to me again a year from now, because by then we'll be in production." □

MORE continued/ however, if one judges not by running time but by impact, then the film certainly warrants superlatives. Even without dialogue, the denouement of the tragic tale of idealism gone wrong, is surprisingly stunning. Osbourne recalled, "A couple of my students said, 'We've been trying to figure out why your films are so dark and you're such a happy guy. We decided you're so happy because you get all your negative stuff out in your work.'" □

Production Starts



END OF DAYS

Arnold Schwarzenegger, having failed to get the green light for Ridley Scott's remake of I AM LEGEND, instead toplines this apocalyptic thriller about the Devil arriving on Earth. Peter Hyams (RELI-C) directs and photographs, from a script by Andrew Marlowe; Robin Tunney co-stars.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE

Liam Neeson (DARKMAN) and Catherine Zeta-Jones star for director Jan DeBont in this refilming of the classic Shirley Jackson novel, adapted by David Self. The idea of remaking this subject is intriguing, but the filmmakers have a long, long way to go if they hope to top the 1960 classic directed by Robert Wise.

MUPPETS FROM SPACE

Kermit and the gang are joined by Andie MacDowell, Ray Liotta and Pat Hingle in this science-fiction spoof directed by Tim Hill from a script by Jerry Huhl, Joseph Maz-zarino, and Ken Kaufman.

SLEEPY HOLLOW

Tim Burton directs this live-action horror film version of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," previously filmed in animation by Disney. Andrew Kevin Walker (SEVEN) wrote the screenplay for producer Scott Rudin (THE ADDAMS FAMILY). Johnny Depp, Christina Ricci, and Casper Van Dien star.

SPOOKY HOUSE

Academy Award-winner Ben Kingsley (GANDHI) and nominee Mercedes Ruehl (THE FISHER KING) top line the cast of this family fantasy directed by William Sachs, from a script co-written with Margaret Sachs.

Godzilla: Millennium

In a move sure to please Kaiju Eiga fans around the world, Japan's Toho Studios has announced that they have a team of three screenwriters toiling on the script that will revive their original version of Godzilla for a film to be released at the end of 1999. (December has been the traditional release date for Toho's recent giant monster films, the new wave Godzilla series and the Mothra efforts that have been filling the gap since Godzilla perished in 1995's GODZILLA VS. DESTROYER.) An April start date is planned for principal photography on the film, which is Toho's way of appeasing fans disappointed by TriStar's computer-generated abomination. Although that film opened strong in Japan, the box office quickly tapered off.

It has long been assumed that Toho would keep their series dormant long enough for TriStar to complete a trilogy, after which they would revive their beast in 2004 for his 50th anniversary. With progress on the TriStar sequel delayed by the disappointing reaction to the first American GODZILLA, Toho isn't waiting. "Sony Pictures has asked us not to make our own version of GODZILLA," a Toho spokesman said in *Daily Variety*, "but there is no contractual relationship barring us from bringing back the Toho version of Godzilla." □

STEPHEN KING'S THE GREEN MILE

Frank Darabont on directing Tom Hanks in the horror best-seller for Castle Rock.

By Douglas Eby

First published in 1996 in six monthly paperback installments, the Stephen King novel is set in the small "death house" of a Southern prison in 1932, with the title referring to the hall with a floor "the color of tired old limes" that leads to the electric chair, nicknamed "Old Sparky." The story is narrated by retired prison guard Paul Edgecombe, played in the film by Tom Hanks. The Castle Rock production, to be released by Warner Bros. next fall, is directed by Frank Darabont, and will be his first film in about five years, following his adaptation of another King novel *THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION*, for which Darabont also wrote the screenplay, as he did for *THE GREEN MILE*. That earlier project earned seven Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture.

Edgecombe relates in flashback an account of his tour of duty at the penitentiary and his charge over a group of convicted killers on death row, especially one giant of a man, John Coffey (played by Michael Clarke Duncan), who reveals such a quality of spirit that Edgecombe suspects he may be innocent of the double murder charge that has put him on the Mile. Coffey at one point saves the life of another key character in the story, Mr. Jingles, a mouse befriended by one of the inmates. Other human characters are played by David Morse, James Cromwell, Michael Jeter, Doug Hutchison, Sam Rock-



Darabont directs Hanks as penitentiary guard Paul Edgecombe in Castle Rock's King adaptation, scheduled for a release next Fall by New Line Cinema.

well, Graham Greene and Bonnie Hunt.

The prime locale for this story, are penitentiary sets conceived by production designer Terence Marsh. The sets are so richly detailed, they really look like the production company somehow reassembled an actual vintage prison on the sound stage. Noted Darabont, "Terry is a genius, an old-world craftsman, and a genius. His work is stunningly good. He won the Academy Award twice, for *DOCTOR ZHIVAGO* and *OLIVER*. His first credit was on *LAWRENCE OF ARABIA*, so you're drawing on a wealth of experience and training. He's from the old school in England, where they actually train you in

an apprenticeship, over a period of years. I can't say enough about him."

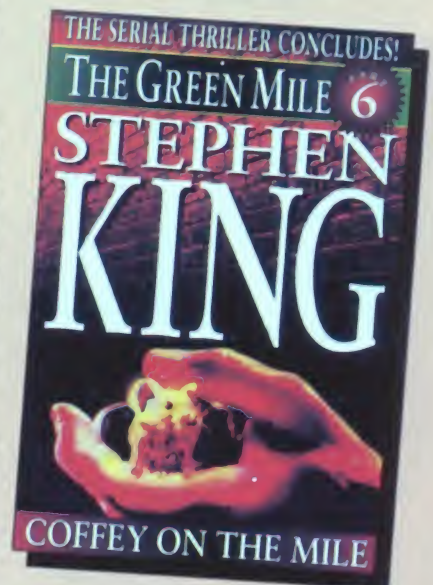
The animal stunt coordinator, Boone Narr, had worked on *MOUSEHUNT*, and noted that film "was a comedy, so we had a certain kind of character and performance. In this picture, it's a little deeper and more sinister about this character [the mouse] and why he's there, and what's going on in the Mile. The deeper you get into the story, you see how this character and his rapport with the men on the Mile developed, so it was a kind of different attitude we had to have with the mouse."

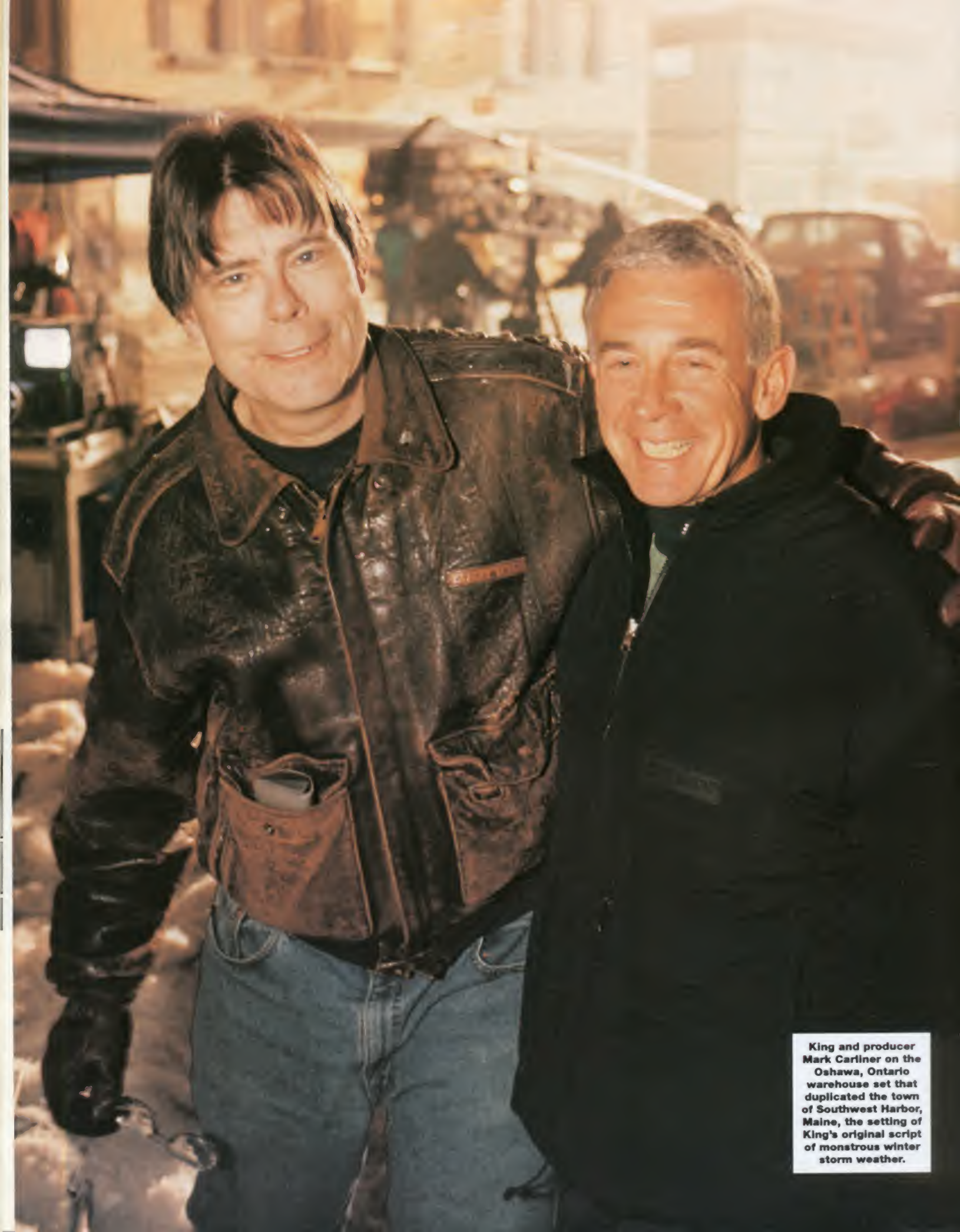
Narr and his group were in charge of a couple of dozen different mice used to portray

Mr. Jingles, complemented by a CGI mouse to be developed by visual effects supervisor Charles Gibson, who also oversees the live action filming of the real mice as second unit director. Gibson pointed out the mouse "is very important to the film, and we have to present it in just the right way. What we're doing is very precise, and it's important to understand what's going on emotionally in the story. The mouse is found by one of the prisoners, who is soon to be executed, and he adopts it and trains it."

Along with others, Gibson has nothing but praise for the level of expertise and commitment of the cast and crew, and has high expectations for this to be a very strong film. □

King's shocker was originally published as a serial in six paperback installments by Signet in 1996.





King and producer Mark Carliner on the Oshawa, Ontario warehouse set that duplicated the town of Southwest Harbor, Maine, the setting of King's original script of monstrous winter storm weather.

STEPHEN KING'S STORM OF THE CENTURY

**ABC's miniseries
epic was tailored by
King for TV horror.**

By Paul Wardle

As executive producer of the exciting new ABC mini-series, **STEPHEN KING'S STORM OF THE CENTURY**, Mark Carliner is the person most qualified to discuss the project. An imposing presence, Carliner is articulate and easy to interview. He had much to say on the subject when he spoke to *Cinefantastique* back in the spring of 1998, on the set where effects shots were being set up and re-filmed until perfection was achieved.

In addition to his previous work with King on the recent TV version of **THE SHINING**, Carliner's credits include the Emmy Award-winning **STALIN**, the Ace and Golden Globe Award-winning **GEORGE WALLACE**, the well received **SCANDAL IN A SMALL TOWN**, and **THE PRESIDENT'S PLANE**

IS MISSING. Among his theatrical releases were **VIVA MAX**, **HEAVEN HELP US** and **CROSSROADS**.

Asked how this new mini-series was originally envisioned, Carliner began, "[Stephen King and I] did **THE SHINING** a few years ago. We shot it in Colorado. It was a wonderful experience for everybody. We became very close during the course of making that picture, and Steve always has a number of cakes in the oven. This one just kind of came out. I think he had thought about writing it as a novel, but it came out as a screenplay. The way he works is that he writes the story that he wants to write. It's not as if somebody pays him to develop something. It's intoxicating the way he [approaches] the networks. He just says, 'Here's the script and if you want to do it, then this is the script we shoot.'



A strange supernatural figure (Colm Feore) haunts the streets of King's fictional Little Tall Island, Maine, bringing with it the **STORM OF THE CENTURY** (below). Talk about creative control, King wrote the script of the miniseries on spec and sold it to ABC on the condition that it be filmed without changes.



MARK CARLINER, EXEC PROD.

“The appeal for [STORM] is not just a narrow, genre audience. If you treat a picture as something with universal appeal, it will broaden its base. That’s why this is such a lavish production.”



Colm Feore plays Linoge, the ominous stranger, jailed by the residents of King’s fictional Little Tall Island, also the setting of DOLORES CLAIBORNE.

There are not that many people that are able to do that. He retains the complete artistic control over the picture.”

The script, about a small town beset by a monster snow storm and resulting chaos and villainy, was shot virtually as written by King. “I’m here to enforce his vision” was how Carliner described his own role in the process.

Carliner conceded that this determination of King’s stems from dissatisfaction with many of the past movies made from his stories. He added however, that King “is extremely happy with the way this is going.” King was also pleased with the results of the producer’s work on THE SHINING and that led him to seek out Carliner again.

Carliner cites a tendency to

downgrade production values for works by writers who are considered ‘genre writers.’ “This story in particular,” noted the producer, “has that cross-over potential. The appeal for this film is not just a narrow, genre audience. If you treat a picture as something with universal appeal, it will, in all likelihood, broaden its base. That’s why this is such a lavish production.”

The production values are indeed high, based on what was visible in the Oshawa building where the secret sets were constructed. Huge mounds of white stuff approximate enormous snow drifts. A section of an actual town in Maine known to King was copied in convincing backlot-type storefronts. These fake buildings are used for shots where windows implode and merchandise is damaged. In this way, the actual town remains unmolested by effects men, and can be used for more demure shooting.

Because this is first and foremost a story about people, as are all of King’s best tales, the author gravitated towards the television format. “In a strange way, it’s perfect for Stephen King,” said Carliner. “This mini-series is going to be published as a screenplay before the

picture airs; the first time that has happened. There’s something very novelistic about the way he writes [screenplays].”

Carliner claimed King laid it on the line when he first brought in the script. He made it quite clear that he had no intention of cutting out any characters, and that the production should allow viewers to get to know the townspeople as if living with them. This movie has cut no corners in its production, and Carliner feels this is an area that has hurt many earlier screen adaptations of King’s work. “We have a tremendous visual effects budget and substantial expenditures for production design,” he said.

“What will make this picture unique,” the producer continued, “is the uniformed brilliance of the performances and the complete credibility of every single actor.”

Yet not everyone is a Stephen King fan, and many shoddy productions from the past have tarnished King’s reputation for some horror movie fans. According to Carliner, these kinds of false perceptions worked against them in the remake of THE SHINING. Some people just assumed they had seen the movie before, when in fact the new version took an en-

The streets of Southwest Harbor, on Mount Desert Island, Maine (left) were duplicated under controlled snowbound conditions on sets (r) in Oshawa, Ontario.



KING'S STORM

HORROR HEROISM

Tim Daly on taking wing as one of King's stalwart protagonists, facing off against the forces of evil.

By Paul Wardle

Known to TV viewers for his long-running role on WINGS, Tim Daly has been branching out as of late. He is the voice of Superman in the popular animated TV series, and starred in a Broadway production of "Coastal Disturbances" and several other movies. The brother of actress Tyne Daly, he will soon be seen in several new TV movies, including this one in 1999.

Titled STEPHEN KING'S STORM OF THE CENTURY, the ABC mini-series concerns a town in Maine overtaken by a monumental snowstorm. Daly plays a policeman trying to deal with his own family problems while keeping order amongst the ensuing chaos. Waiting for his day to begin in a trailer near Oshawa Ontario, Daly agreed to speak about his involvement in the project and life in general.

First off, how does acting in a big-budget TV movie like this one differ from appearing in sitcoms? "For me, not at all," he said. "My job is just to tell the truth of the story from the character's point of view. Obviously, there are certain technical things. I could probably bend a few lines around here to get laughs, but it would be inappropriate for the piece."

When asked what attracted him to this script, which was written by King as an original screenplay, and not an adaptation of a previous work, Daly replied, "Two things. One is the character, who is a guy that I haven't really gotten a chance



Daly, Jeffrey Demunn and Casey Siemaczk, breathing the plastic snow on location in Southwest Harbor, Maine, an acting stretch after WINGS.

to play before on film. He's quiet, he's strong. He's got an iron will and kind of old-fashioned values. He's not an overly articulate guy, and yet he's very passionate about his beliefs."

This "Gary Cooper" quality to which Daly refers is not as easy as it looks. According to Daly, "You have to make that come across in a way that's not really verbal. I find that challenging and interesting. The other thing is the story. I found it terrifying. I couldn't put it down. It was like being trapped in a nightmare. Anyone who's got kids will see this as the ultimate nightmare. Stephen [King]'s work has that quality."

Daly, who does have children, would not divulge the meaning of his evasive remarks, for fear of ruining the impact of the show when, it airs, but as any reader of King's work knows, surprises abound at

every turn.

"When I was reading this piece," Daly continued, "I guess I could say, without giving anything away, what a lot of it's about is what will happen to a collective consciousness when it is threatened or put under a great deal of stress. People who are collectively good can make big mistakes [under circumstances like that]."

Daly drew a comparison between the people of this town [rebuilt in Canada to represent an actual town in Maine where other filming took place] and German citizens during WWII. Though they may have stood by, turning a blind eye to Hitler's atrocities for fear of their own lives, basically they were decent people underneath. But he acknowledged, "I think people are capable of incredible amounts of denial, when it means 'My kids are okay, I'm

okay; I've got enough to eat right now; I feel bad for those people next door, but I'm fine,' and don't say anything. I think you can convince yourself that it's not as bad as it is if you're okay."

He hastened to add that the "mob psychology" is sometimes used to produce remarkable rescue efforts and other positive results. "These people in the story are tested," continued Daly. "I never have been, so I don't know how I'd react."

The characters in the story react in various ways to the evil that surrounds them and the hardships brought on by the snowstorm. Not all the characters are quick-thinking and heroic. For that reason, Daly believes it will appear much more realistic than the laughable old disaster films of the 1970's, for instance. "One of the reasons this piece is so honest and unique," remarked Daly, "is that, in film history, we've seen a lot of characters with integrity and that sort of carries them through so they live happily ever after. This piece is about the price you pay for losing your integrity, and... the price that you pay to keep it. That's what we so often don't see. Integrity has a price as well. As far as this story goes, the price of integrity is pain."

Daly's association with King's projects began when THE SHINING was made into a TV mini-series that presented the story truer to the source material than did the original Kubrick film. Daly turned down the role because "I couldn't get

the image of Jack Nicholson out of my head." Though he liked Steven Webber's performance in the remake, it was a task Daly was not willing to undertake. "You knew from frame one that this guy was going to kill everyone," Daly remarked of the Kubrick version. "Even though I thought that was a mistake on his part, I thought that his performance was so entertaining and memorable, that there was no way that I could do the part and not have it compared to his performance."

True to Daly's reservations, every review he read of Steven Webber's interpretation compared it to Nicholson. "I thought the book was one of the most terrifying stories I've ever read in my life," said Daly of *The Shining* novel.

Asked what is the most challenging aspect of this endeavor, Tim Daly quipped, "Probably getting the snow out of my eyes at the end of the day." He isn't kidding. In my short time on the set, I got fake snow on me in places I never expected. Everyone on the set has the same problem. The tiny flakes stick to fabric like lint on a wool sweater. "This fake snow is brutal."

The snow is a chemical compound, and in Daly's words, "a little like breathing a plastic bag. It goes in your mouth and your eyes, so it's difficult holding it together so that you're not coughing or squinting too much. I remember the first day we did [a snow scene], where I backed up this car and got out to [deliver a line to another actor]. I opened my mouth to speak to him and I got a mouthful of this snow. So I looked down and there's a guy on the floor with this huge powerful fan, dumping a box full of this snow in front of the fan. I've had vast experience with snow and I've never seen snow fall from the ground up. It always comes down from [above]. This guy had me in his cross hairs. He was just bombing me with this shit. We've had to make some adjustments, so that the actors have some [recourse]." Viewing an effects scene where a store window exploded from the outside, everyone nearby was given protective goggles. "Did you see any goggles on the actors?"

TIM DALY, ACTOR

"A lot of what [STORM's] about is what will happen to a collective consciousness when it's threatened. People who are good can make big mistakes."



Daly plays a policeman (above) trying to deal with his own family problems while keeping order during the crisis of a supernaturally monumental snowstorm. Below: With wife Debrah Farentino and son Dylan Christopher.



Daly asked rhetorically and the answer is of course, no.

Daly spoke of co-star Colm Feore, who plays the evil nemesis who tries to take over the town. "I call him scary lighting boy," Daly joked. "He's got this great lighting and he looks so fantastically scary, he doesn't have to move. He's probably thinking about lunch, but when I hear the scary music I think, 'That's all the guy needs.'"

For him, the most physically demanding part of filming *STORM OF THE CENTURY* is that he spends most of the time "incredibly tense." His character is under a lot of stress, and according to Daly, "when you act stressed, your body thinks you *are* stressed. Your body can be tense all day, and if you're doing scene after scene like that, it can be very exhausting."

Shooting indoors means that "your shots are limited." In this Oshawa structure about the size of an airplane hangar, the model town has been built to scale, but there is a ceiling that reminds you that you're on a movie set. "Everything has to be a little bit more contained, and yet, this was done wisely to have some control. They've shot exteriors already and plates were made, so that I believe that when you see it, it will be seamless."

Of his long tenure on *WINGS*, he has no regrets about the show ending. "Seventy-four shows, seven years; it's time to go." Daly has already turned down some 30 scripts for TV shows that didn't interest him. "As much as I loved the people and thought we had an amazingly talented group of writers, producers and directors, my ultimate feeling coming away from it, was potential unfulfilled. I think we could've done better with that group. Not that we didn't do really well, but I always felt we could've been a *big* hit. I don't want to sound like sour grapes, because in many ways it's been a blessing, but I always felt it could've been more special."

However, the fame he gained from the show has made it possible for Tim Daly to do things like *STORM OF THE CENTURY*, which he feels will be very special, and from the amazing sets I saw last spring, he may be right. □

tirely different approach to the story and direction. That stigma, he feels, will not take place here, because the script is completely new and unread.

Far from being a detriment for mainstream viewers, King's name above the title will be "its single greatest attraction," said Carliner. "You can be sure that if, in the view of the marketing geniuses, Stephen King's name were a liability, it would not appear. This is much more ambitious and less of a genre subject. When people tune in, I don't think they'll tune out."

The villain of the story, played by Colm Feore, was one of the easiest parts to cast. As Carliner remembered, "It was Stephen King's feeling when he sent the script, that he didn't want to have an actor who we knew so well. He wanted to get an actor who had the range, but was not known, so that the character would be the focus of the attention."

Working with an excellent casting director, Carliner asked for a list of 20 good actors whose names Carliner wouldn't know. The part that would eventually go to Feore, called for a virtuoso performance. "I went down the list of names, and got cassettes of their work. When I got to the letter F, I found the name Colm Feore. I saw THIRTY-TWO SHORT FILMS ABOUT GLENN GOULD and I stopped looking. I said, 'This is the man.'"

Feore's performance in the award-winning film was so strong that, in Carliner's view, "It was as if it was an audition tape for [this film]. I called Steve and told him I had the guy. He looked at THIRTY-TWO SHORT FILMS ... and agreed right away." A later meeting with Feore, who lives in Toronto, only an hour's drive from this shooting site in Oshawa, confirmed their opinions. A battle of wills ensued between King and Carliner who wanted Feore, and the network, who were looking for a famous name to insure ratings. The producers dug-in their heels and refused to consider anyone but



Jeffrey Demunn as Little Tall Island's self-important leading citizen Robble Beals, committing suicide under the influence of the Stranger, with a note warning the town.

Feore for the role of the mysterious evil presence that holds the town in its grasp. The network finally relented and Feore has proven their confidence in him to be justified.

One would think that with Stephen King's name to sell the movie, that would be sufficient for the marketing executives. But, as Carliner suggested, "With the kind of money they're spending, they want to have some insurance. I certainly was sympathetic to their needs. With Tim Daly, who has got a very high television profile, we were able to scratch that itch for them later. I think that Colm Feore will explode out of this film. I think he will become extremely well-known. He's having a great time with it. He's dazzling! You absolutely cannot take your eyes off him. If you're going to play that kind of character, he should be mesmerizing."

The character, a further extension of The Dark Man from THE STAND, represents the forces of Satan. "Stephen King

writes about good and evil and the elemental forces of nature. In this case, we're dealing with evil *and* the elemental forces of nature. It's about the various manifestations of evil. It forces us to look within ourselves. In most of Steve's best work, he poses a moral dilemma. In this one, it's particularly excruciating. Those of us who have children would hope to never have to make the choices that these

parents are called upon to make. It's an opportunity for all of us to examine our priorities."

Carliner then addressed the question of whether or not this evil force is responsible for the crippling snowstorm, or is just using a natural occurrence to his advantage. "Is it a coincidence that these forces seem to arrive at the same time?" he asked rhetorically. We'll just have to wait and see.

The series will be broadcast on ABC in three parts, on February 14, 15 and 18. Carliner is adamant that the public will be dazzled by this film. He claims this is not merely hyperbole, but genuine excitement for a project that he feels exceeds the quality and significance of even his previous award-winning efforts. The elaborate snow-covered sets, for instance, cost a million dollars to assemble for a mere six days of shooting. "Now you tell me," challenged Carliner, "in the world of television, where you can spend a million dollars for a set that you'll work on for six days."

In order to make a movie like this, "where two thirds of the film takes place in a howling, white-out blizzard," costs run very high. As Carliner explained, "The reason it's so expensive to do this is because you can't be waiting for the snow [on a location]. As we discovered in THE SHINING where we figured we'd be bailed out, because we were in the Colorado Rockies, well, ha

Screenwriter and executive producer Stephen King goes over a scene with star Tim Daly on the set in Oshawa, getting it on film just the way he wrote it.





Tim Daly as grocer and part-time constable Mike Anderson and Casey Siemaszko as Hatch (l), his friend, getting the drop on Colm Feore's Stranger.

ha ha. It didn't happen. The snow is something that you control or it controls you. In order to control mother nature, you have to spend a lot of money. The irony here is that we're damned if we do and we're damned if we don't. We have spent a million and a half dollars creating snow. Then to add insult to injury, we go to Southwest Harbour, and we have to spend money to remove the snow! We're in the actual town, shooting sequences where we cannot have snow. Two days ago, they had six inches of snow. So now, while we have a crew here, creating the manufactured stuff, we have another crew in Southwest Harbour getting rid of the stuff!"

After working with King on *THE SHINING* and now *STORM OF THE CENTURY*, Mark Carliner has implored Stephen King to refrain from snow scenes in any future projects. "You have to create a blizzard that becomes progressively worse. This is very complicated. You're shooting at different levels of snow and they all have to match."

The million dollars spent to construct a portion of Southwest Harbour, Maine in Oshawa, Ontario was well spent. Carliner reported that actual residents travelled northwest to Oshawa to see the recreation of their hometown and were astonished by the set's accuracy. Carliner claimed even town residents who watch the show on TV will not be able to distinguish the on-screen representa-

tions of the real buildings from the phony storefronts. Craig Stearns, who worked with Carliner on *THE SHINING*, was also production designer on *STORM OF THE CENTURY*.

The \$30 million-plus budget makes this a TV movie on the same production level as major feature films. "You'll see it all on the screen," said Carliner. "You'll see what \$35 million looks like. The major responsibility of the executive producer, aside from assembling the right people, is to make sure we have enough money to do the job." Heated discussions with the network were needed to convince them that the movie was worth the kind of money it would take to shoot it properly.

"Stephen wrote the script on spec. It has intrinsic value and it has market value. Most of the money that networks spend in the development process is burned. For every five scripts they buy, they issue one movie. Yet here's a script that they paid nothing for. So if they want to do it, all they have to do is agree to give us enough money to do the picture."

King is also an executive producer, and retains full copyright. The network pays him for the rights to film it and distribute it, but the producers also have a duty to bring the film in for the budget they submitted. Though Mark Carliner admitted the network did not want to spend this much money, his heated discussions paid off. According to Carliner, "They'll get their money's worth." □

KING'S STORM

SNOW EFX

Making it snow on cue on the set and look real.

By Paul Wardle

In a remote part of an industrial section of in Oshawa, Ontario, an ABC-TV movie was filmed early in 1998. Just east of Toronto, the Canadian town rented out an enclosed structure, large enough to construct aircraft. It was here that a replica of a small town in Maine was constructed, to be a backdrop for interior and special effects scenes, later to be edited together with shots of the actual town. Covering the storefronts, mock streets and signs is a thick blanket of what looks like snow. This is where Mike Kavanagh comes in. It is his job to supply the snow which pervades every part of this production.

In Stephen King's script, the town is overtaken by a monster blizzard that effectively shuts down the municipality and leaves it vulnerable to an attack from an unknown force. Huge drifts, up to five and six feet

high, are constructed by painting and gluing white plastic flakes onto curved wooden structures. The whole atmosphere of the set accurately conveys a feel of cold, desolate winter, and the deserted streets are softly lit, rendering an icy creepiness to the setting.

Between takes, Kavanagh finally stopped moving long enough to chat. Dressed in work gear and baseball cap, he is a man of few words, but entertaining and jovial when he does talk. His career in effects spans 20 years, and though not especially mechanically inclined at first, he is now one of the most sought after effects men in Toronto.

Among the older techniques that Kavanagh has revived along with newer methods, he revealed, "We're using chipped ice for snow. That's kind of an old thing that had gone away and is coming back."

To approximate a killer

A tidal wave hits the light at Little Tall Island in a *STORM OF THE CENTURY* raised by the mysterious stranger, airing on ABC February 14, 15 and 18.





Effects supervisor Mike Kavanagh used plastic snow whipped up by Ritter fans and dropped from above from cranes to simulate Maine's snowbound streets on Canadian warehouse sets.

snowstorm, Kavanagh used a variety of technical devices. A lot of wind was needed, both outdoors and in the studio, and “so that we wouldn’t be a slave to any of the wind conditions we encountered on the location, we decided to provide wind from any and all directions so that it would look like a constant maelstrom of wind and snow.”

The snow consisted of potato flakes and foam on location, “and plastic snow here inside the studio,” Kavanagh explained. These are blown around from several different angles, often at the same time. “It makes it easier to shoot when we go back and forth from locations, so that if the wind is coming from another direction, it’s just as easy for us to add our wind into the prevailing wind on the location and mix it up a little bit. It’s not like a prevailing screen wind direction that we have to adhere to, which would’ve made this project next to impossible.”

Mechanics and spare equipment are standing by, particularly with the wind machines. Sudden malfunctions can cost time and money on a tight shooting schedule, and Kavanagh’s responsibilities include maintaining and testing equipment and effects to insure the safety of the actors and crew, and also a smooth pattern of efficiency on the set. Some of the technology

was existing from past projects and certain machines were modified by Kavanagh’s staff for **STORM OF THE CENTURY**.

“I know for this show, we’ve built a couple of V-8 wind machines that we can put on zoom boom forklifts. That gives us the stability to put the machines 30-40 feet up in the air, and get up and over the camera to blow snow. It’s a small innovation, but it’s helped us a lot with this show.”

Sometimes, however, because of scheduling changes or budget constraints, Kavanagh’s crew are forced to alter their plans for achieving an effect. When this occurs, it can be frustrating and cause extra overtime, but his people rise to the occasion. “A lot of my job is to provide a solution to their situation. Not to tell them we can’t do something, but to give them an alternative,” he said.

Kavanagh’s numerous past projects have included films by David Cronenberg, who is also based out of Toronto. He said Stephen King and David Cronenberg are both sweet guys to work for, and he has a relationship with many top movie people going back many years. “Mr. King has been by here several times, and he seems to be quite happy with what the director is shooting and what the effects are, so we feel pretty good,” Kavanagh reported.

Besides the snow and wind, there is a flood sequence that Kavanagh created, and a flying sequence where, in his own words, “the bad guy in the show takes nine little

children and they go flying in the air all around the town.”

Echoing the sentiments of actor Tim Daly and others on the show, Mike Kavanagh’s worst problems on this shoot were “the little bits of snow, under people’s eyes have probably caused us more trouble on this show than we would encounter on any other project.”

When his effects are going to be used around actors, Kavanagh will do a demonstration. This helps the actors not be distracted when the film is rolling and the machines are turned on. “They know what to expect and how to prepare for it so they won’t be jarred or shocked. If it’s any concern [to the actors], we’ll show them a test and maybe a video tape of the effect so that it’s a known quantity to everyone in the production.”

Sometimes this orientation will take place days before the effects are scheduled to be shot. This allows actors to get comfortable with the machinery without the pressure of lights and time being wasted. They can then walk onto the set with confidence, having adjusted to the effects at their own speed.

Kavanagh’s crew consisted of 12 regular employees, and he augmented them with another dozen on a daily basis as needed. “The snow job,” as Kavanagh jokingly referred to the project, “is so demanding. We’re pretty intense on the manpower, we’re pretty intense on the supplies, it’s very tedious work and very demanding.” □

Buffy, Vampire Slayer

**Series creator Joss Whedon
on his TV teen horror hit.**

By Mitch Persons

In our last cover story on *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER* (29:11:32), Fran Rubel Kuzui, the director of the 1992 film, and one of the executive producers of the TV series, was quoted as saying that Joss Whedon, the writer of the movie, "had Buffy just roaming around, sticking stakes through vampire's hearts. There was no humor, and absolutely none of the martial arts that you saw in the final film. Also, he had written the character of Buffy as being so stupid and empty, she was totally unbelievable."

Whedon, who plans to write and direct a *BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE* feature film, on the set with Gellar.



Kuzui's comments raised a few eyebrows at Whedon's Mutant Enemy Productions. Strangely enough, Whedon, the creator/executive producer/head writer of TV's *BUFFY*, seemed fairly unconcerned.

"I talked to Fran right after that article," said Whedon, "and we had a big laugh about it. I'm being constantly quoted as saying how much I hated the movie *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*, which I didn't, and both of us are sort of used to it. We've been set against each other in the press before, so it was no big deal."

This genial attitude toward the press appears to be an integral part of Whedon's professional makeup. That goes for boasts as well as blasts.

"A journalist once asked me if I knew that *BUFFY*, like *ALL IN THE FAMILY*, which bailed out CBS, and *MARRIED WITH CHILDREN*, which saved Fox, had more or less salvaged the WB Network. I answered that it might be a simplistic view, but, let's perpetuate it!" Whedon laughed. "We are not WB's highest-rated show, but I do think we made a big splash in the press, and made people take the network seriously, where it wasn't before. I recently heard one of the executives say that 'Well, we got Kevin Williamson [of *DAWSON'S CREEK*,] and we never would have done that if we didn't have *BUFFY*.'"

"Now, *DAWSON'S CREEK* is a bigger hit than *BUFFY* ratings-wise, but I think that we did lead the way a little bit. This executive's opinion is not entirely that simple, but there is an element of truth in it. That's pretty cool. On the flip side, the WB made



Sarah Michelle Gellar as Buffy crosses swords with David Boreanaz as Angel, her vampire lover.

BUFFY in a way that no other network would. So, if WB now has a grown-up status, I would say that they have earned it.

"They earned it, I believe, by letting us do kind of a very strange and different, and somewhat challenging show. It's challenging to me, and I don't think there's another network that would have given us that kind of support. Their involvement was not to meddle, and that in itself is an extraordinary thing from a network. There are certain things, like casting, where their instincts are



The conflict in second season's "The Becoming, Part I," pits Buffy against an Angel turned bad.

better than mine. Every time I say this, people respond, 'Well, okay, so you know, you've been paid to say this,' but the fact of the matter is I don't think I'll ever have as good a relationship with a network as I do with the WB.

"That relationship allowed us to go in directions in the second season of *BUFFY* that I don't think we would have been able to go anywhere else. For instance, in 'Surprise,' or as we call it, the Loss of Virginitiy Show, we had established Angel as a sym-

pathetic character. After he and Buffy sleep together, he reverts to somebody completely evil. The temptation would have been to have Angel go on and on as Mr. Good Guy, but that would have been boring, and in truth, being a bad vampire gave David [Boreanaz] more to do as an actor.

"Yet 'Surprise' was not simply a showcase for David. We wanted to do a show that really hit on the idea of the kind of heart-break that the loss of virginity can bring. Many girls have gone through what Buffy went through, that is, 'Well, I've slept with him and now he's treating me really badly.' We had girls on the Net saying to us, 'Oh God, that exact thing happened to me.'

"See, nothing really works unless it's emotionally identifiable. If the audience has no idea of what it must feel like to be fighting the vampires, as Buffy and her crew do, then they're not really going to be interested in it. That's the whole thing about the show, is to hit those high school metaphors. But it's not 'Let's talk about sex, let's talk about drinking,' it's about 'How do you feel? How did that feel?' I'm not saying that everybody who has sex has the horror show that Buffy had, but it is very identifiable; it could happen. It's something for people to latch onto.

"Something else that our audiences seemed to eat up was our switching from stand-alone episodes, such as 'Go Fish,' and 'Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered' to the episodic ones, the ones that prolong our running plot. We got that idea, actually, from *THE X-FILES*, but it wasn't like 'Oh, let's try that because it worked for them.' It was more like, we know what we want to do, we have continuing relationships, and have things change, and have arcs for people, but at the same time, we don't want it to become like *MELROSE PLACE* where you have to watch all the time to have any idea of what's going on. We knew we wanted stand-alone monsters. The thing with *THE X-FILES* for us was that it just showed, yes, this can be done, and very efficiently.

"Our episodic segments got more involved character-wise because I think that people really did care about the personal lives of the *BUFFY* regulars. We knew that that was one of our strengths, that the sort of soap opera element of the show was really important to people, and we realized that we could go there. Part of that also, is that it keeps it interesting for ourselves. It's not the same dynamic every single show; the actors prove their mettle so well that we know we can go anywhere

“Nothing really works unless it's emotionally identifiable. That's the whole thing about the show—hit those high school metaphors.”

—Creator, Joss Whedon—

with any of them, and we wouldn't just have 'Monster of the Week' with the Scooby-Doo gang. We knew there was more there. In addition, the more time we spent with our cast members, the more we cared about them, and wanted to find out what happened to them. We wanted to give all the guys girlfriends and all the girls boyfriends.

"It's no secret that in our second season we concentrated more on relationships than we did in the first. We have Buffy and Angel—sort of—Willow and Oz, Giles and Jenny, at least for a time, and of course, Xander and Cordelia. That whole thing with Cordelia and Xander came more or less out of thin air. It was at the end of last season that I thought of it. We were working on the beginning of the second season, and then I said, suddenly, 'Okay, in episode ten ['What's My Line, Part 2'] they're going to smooch, and rather suddenly. I hadn't really finalized this decision, it had just been in the back of my head, and I looked at the episodes we had already done, and the way they were fighting was growing in intensity so much, it was like they were telling me, 'We must kiss!' That's where the 'I hate you but I'm wild about your hormones' relationship between these two kids sprang from.

Geller in the hands of a nasty group of vampires known as The Three in "Angel," the first season show that introduced regular David Boreanaz.



BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

EPISODE GUIDE

By Mitch Persons

"I love you, Angel. I just don't know if I can trust you."

—Buffy

LIE TO ME

★★★★ 1/2

11-3-97. Written and directed by Joss Whedon. Music by Sisters of Mercy.

Buffy witnesses what she believes is a romantic exchange between Angel and Drusilla (Juliet Landau). Jealous, Buffy openly flaunts a former boyfriend of hers, naive Billy Ford (Jason Behr), in front of Angel.

Billy is not what he appears to be. He belongs to a group of people who meet nightly at a place called The Sunset Club. It is the goal of each member of the group to become a vampire so that he or she can attain immortality. It is Billy's intention to deliver Buffy to Spike (James Marsters) in exchange for eternal life for all the members of the club.

Billy lures Buffy to the Sunset Club, but the shrewd girl figures out that there's something rotten at the club other than the food. She and Billy have a heated confrontation during which Billy reveals that he is dying of cancer. He is afraid of death, he tells her, and the possibility of an eternal life is just too much of a temptation to resist. Just as Buffy is telling Billy that the creature he becomes will not be the real Billy, Spike, Drusilla, and a host of vampire-ettes invade the club.



Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar) works out in "Lie To Me," preparing for her showdown with Spike, echoing the action of the original movie.

As dramatic as the segment was, there were the usual snappy Whedon touches: Buffy chastising one of the Sunset Club's member's costume as being "dorky;" Spike asking if the "local restaurant delivers" when Billy first walks into his lair.

There are a couple of glitches in this otherwise fine story. It has been made clear more than once (and several times in this one segment) that a vampire cannot enter an abode unless he or she has been invited. If this is the case, why is it that Spike and his minions just breeze right into the Sunset Club? And why are the Sunset Club members so eager to vacate the premises? Their whole reason for being at this funfest is to be turned into vampires by Spike.

"So, you're back!"

—Giles, to his own reflection.

THE DARK AGE

★★★★

11-10-97. Written by Dean Batali and Rob Des Hotel. Directed by Bruce Seth Green.

Onto Sunnydale's school grounds one night comes Phillip Henry (Stuart McLean) an old school chum of Giles'. Henry's visit is not a social call, as he is being pursued by a walking corpse called Deidre (Wendy Way) and is seeking Giles' help. Before Henry can get to Giles, he is strangled by the woman, who soon dissolves into a puddle of sticky green goo. The goo flows over to Henry's body and envelops it.

The next day, Giles is visited by a police detective (Carlease Burke) who asks The Watcher to accompany her to headquarters to identify a man's body that was found outside the library. It seems that there was a piece of paper in the man's pocket with Giles' name on it.

Giles identifies the body as being that of his old friend Phillip. There is a mysterious, twisted tattoo on the man's arm that Giles denies knowing anything about, although he appears shaken upon seeing it.

That evening, Buffy goes to visit Giles, but finds him in a pitiful state of drunkenness. After

Billy (Jason Behr) gets double-crossed by Spike in "Lie To Me," a dying cancer victim who seeks vampirism as a path to eternal life.



rudely slamming his door in Buffy's face, Giles puts in a long-distance call to London to talk to Deidre. It turns out that Deidre has passed away. Upset, Giles goes into the bathroom to splash some water on his face. When he rolls up his sleeve, the same tattoo that was found on Phillip Henry can be clearly seen on his arm.

Buffy is extremely worried about Giles' behavior. She goes to the library to talk to him, but instead she finds Ethan Rayne (Robin Sachs) the demoniacal owner of Ethan's Costume Shop. After trying to push a bookshelf down on Buffy, Ethan reveals that he and Giles have known each other for a long time. When Buffy presses Ethan for more information, he merely tells her to ask Giles about the mysterious tattoo, which he calls "The Mark of Eyghon."

The next Saturday Buffy confronts Giles in the library, but he refuses to divulge any information. Just then, the corpse of Phillip Henry charges in and makes a lunge for Buffy. Cordelia, Willow, Xander, and Ms. Calendar (Robia La Morte) who are in the school for a tutorial, rush in when they hear all the commotion. Henry knocks Ms. Calendar unconscious. Suddenly, his body begins to shiver and shake, then dissolves into the sticky puddle of goo. The goo flows onto Ms. Calendar's hand.

While Giles takes the semi-conscious Ms. Calendar to his home, Willow delves into Giles' books and comes up with some startling information. The Mark of Eyghon, it appears, is an Etruscan symbol for a demon who can only exist by possessing an unconscious host. Unless the proper exorcism rituals are observed, the possession is permanent, and Eyghon will be reborn from within that host. Eyghon is able to take full possession of the recently dead, but its demonic energy soon disintegrates the host, and it must jump to the nearest dead or unconscious person to continue living.



The corpse of Phillip Henry (Stuart McLean) dissolves into a puddle of green goo, infecting unconscious Ms. Calendar in "The Dark Age."

At Giles' home, Ms. Calendar is behaving in a very un-Ms. Calendar-like way. She savagely attempts to seduce Giles, and when he resists, she turns into a leprous demon (with a Mercedes McCambridge/EXORCIST voice) and tries to exterminate him. Buffy breaks in and forces Ms. Calendar to flee. Giles admits that during his college years in England, he, Ethan, Deidre, Phillip, and another student joined the Cult of Eyghon. Giles had assumed that once he renounced his participation in the cult, that would be the end of his evil activities. It turns out he was wrong. Eyghon is on the loose, and has already claimed the lives of Deidre, Phillip, and the other student. He and Ethan are the only two left.

Buffy races to Ethan's studio to save him. Ethan repays her by trying to brand her with the Mark of Eyghon. Before he can succeed, Ms. Calendar bursts in. Buffy fights her, but the demon knocks her down. Angel unexpectedly appears and struggles with Ms. Calendar. For a while it looks as if Angel is going to be Eyghon's next victim, but



Buffy holds a knife to the throat of Juliet Landau as Drusilla in "Lie To Me," forcing Spike to release the Sunset Club vampire wannabes.

Buffy grabs Drusilla. She threatens to cut Drusilla's lovely throat unless Spike lets all the Sunset Club members go. The vampire has no choice but to give in. Buffy and most of the members run out, but Billy stays. Spike, angered at Billy's plan going awry, takes the boy's life.

Whedon has provided an opportunity for Gellar to give her finest acting performance. Her conversation with Billy toward the end of the episode is touching and heart-wrenching. For the first time, Buffy emerges as a mature, concerned woman, and not a tepid high school girl.

"The idea there," says Whedon, "was to do a really heavily dramatic episode, with the episode structured so that Buffy's conversation with Ford was, in fact, the climax of the show. Instead of a giant fight-fest, or a terrifying monster, what I really wanted to get to was to have Buffy face a deep emotional issue. We had delivered enough monsters in other episodes, so we had a place to do that. Actually, it's scary to do something that straight and that dramatic, and we did, obviously, have a fight afterwards, but really, the whole show was designed to allow Sarah to get to that place emotionally."



Drusilla (Juliet Landau), the Judge (Brian Thompson) and Spike (James Marsters) plot Buffy's downfall in second season's two-parter "Surprise," which sees Angel join their ranks to vanquish the Slayer.

"Things like that are constantly happening. There has been something of an erroneous impression that I am the one who comes up with all these ideas, twists of plot, characterizations, etc. It's true I've done my share, but BUFFY is a collaborative effort, especially at the writing end. What usually happens is David Greenwalt, our co-producer and I sit down with the writer who's going to write a particular script, and we break the story with them. By 'breaking the story' I mean we come up with an outline for the entire story, scene by scene, act by act, making sure that the show works. We don't say, 'How about there's a werewolf? Okay, go write it.' Sometimes a scene may not ring true; we may say, that character's too mean, or you know what, I think they should be reacting to this other thing.

"All our writers undergo this process. Marti Noxon, who wrote six of our second season episodes, and is now a co-producer of BUFFY, is very familiar with this system. Even David and I have to go through it. Neither of us will write a script until it's been properly broken down. But I do have to say that I wouldn't be able to do anything with a story if it wasn't for David. He really is the master story breaker.

"Breaking the story is the most grueling part of working on BUFFY, where we say, 'We've done this last week, and we're going to do this next week, so what the hell do we do here?' Once we get that worked out, it's back to the writer, then back to us.

"Believe it or not, the most difficult time for this process is not the beginning of the season, but the middle. By the time we've reached our eleventh or twelfth episode, we've sort of run out of surprises. That's why the start of a new season is

such an exciting time. It's like old home week, in a way. Viewers get reacquainted with their old friends, plus they find some new elements. BUFFY fans already know that in season three she's come back home, and that Angel has returned from Hell in one form or another. Oz is now a regular, and we certainly haven't heard the last of Spike and Drusilla. But we will be introducing the mayor, and finding out a little bit about the Conspiracy of Silence that he and Principal Snyder are involved in [in 'I Only Have Eyes For You,' second season.]

"This year we deal with Buffy's senior year, so there will be a lot of senior stuff going on, the prom, and so forth. Then, when Buffy graduates, there will be a big change—in Angel. He's going to be moving to Los Angeles, and then on to his own series.

"The series, called ANGEL, will be produced by David Greenwalt. David Boreanaz will continue on as Angel. ANGEL is a show that is similar in tone to BUFFY, but with a few embellishments. The series is a little more adult, a little darker in tone; but much as in BUFFY, Angel's personal demons literally become real demons—ones that he finds he must eliminate.

"His life will be grim, but watching ANGEL will not be like following the misadventures of some evil troll, nor will viewers be seeing a loveable vampire like the kind Eddie Murphy played in A VAMPIRE IN BROOKLYN. In the series Angel is this tortured individual, a creature who is constantly dealing with everything that has happened in the last three seasons of BUFFY: all the love, all the adventure, and all the evil." □

since he is neither dead nor unconscious, the demon has nowhere to go. Ms. Calendar returns to normal, and Ethan, ever the courageous one, runs for his life.

"The Dark Age" is mostly a mood piece, with the transformation of Ms. Calendar into the demon the only horror element. Head, as the drunken, guilt-laden Giles, and Robin Sachs as the evil, cowardly, yet intelligent and charming Ethan are effective. La Morte is given a chance to show off both her considerable feminine charms and her ability to be genuinely frightening in her scenes with Giles.

Says director Bruce Seth Green, "Robia and I did a lot of talking about what the character was going through. We didn't see eye to eye on a lot of it. I knew the way Dean [Batali] and Rob [Des Hotel] saw the character, and even Joss supported me when I asked for a certain performance from Robia. It took work, but the material was there. It was an excellent script, a very strong script, a very strong episode for her. She and I just worked it out.

"My concept of directing is that a good director should be essentially invisible. The character should take over. I like to work closely with the actors because that's how I can get my work to be invisible, in a way. I don't believe in pyrotechnics just for style. I don't like to stylize things, except when it's absolutely necessary. In 'The Dark Age' we had the flashbacks, which the script required. When it comes to performances, though, it's best to let the actors do it."

"With all this slaying, I just get messed sometimes."

—Buffy

WHAT'S MY LINE?, PART 1

11-17-97. Written by Howard Gordon and Marti Noxon. Directed by David Solomon.

Drusilla is getting weaker and weaker. Spike decides that he is going to eliminate the one thing that is cutting off his beloved's food supply: The Slayer.

Spike puts out a call to all assassins, human and non-human, male and female, to kill Buffy. Among them is a decidedly sensuous one named Kendra (Bianca Lawson.)



Buffy squares off with Kendra (Bianca Lawson), who answers Spike's call for assassins to eliminate the Slayer in "What's My Line, Part 1."

Kendra is able to locate Buffy while she is having a *tete-a-tete* with Angel at a skating rink. The assassin follows Buffy home and attempts to kill her. Buffy fights back, but finds her attacker just as strong and resilient as she is. While the two girls are catching their breath, Kendra reveals that she is not an assassin, but "Kendra the Vampire Slayer."

Since this is a two-parter, there are a lot of extraneous close-ups of Buffy looking baffled. The bombshell of an ending is a nice surprise, though.

It's interesting that the obligatory exposition scenes between Giles and Buffy in this episode resemble those in the late John Bellairs' excellent

occult novel, "The House with a Clock in Its Walls." The book tells of a strong friendship between an emerging adolescent, Lewis Barnavelt, and his uncle Jonathan, a wizard. The symbiotic relationship is very similar to that of Buffy's and Giles.'

"Nobody, but nobody, tortures my boyfriend."
—Buffy

WHAT'S MY LINE, PART 2 ★★★

11-24-97. Written by Marti Noxon. Directed by David Semel.

With Drusilla fading away before his eyes, Spike becomes desperate. He kidnaps Angel, ties him naked to a post, and starts exchanging Angel's healthy blood for Drusilla's.

Into this scene of grisly mayhem burst Kendra and Buffy. After a brief fight, the two Slayers rescue Angel. An oil lamp is overturned in the scuffle. Spike and Drusilla apparently perish in the flames.

After Kendra departs Sunnydale, Drusilla is seen rising from the ashes of the fire with the unconscious Spike in her arms. She has been restored to life by Angel's blood. She and Spike will return.

"What's My Line, Part 2" is the darkest and most disturbing *BUFFY* yet, one that is very hard to shake off. In spite of the gloom, there are some charming moments. One of them is where Cordelia and Xander, finding themselves in tight quarters, suddenly (and quite passionately) kiss.

Most of the horror of this episode comes from the acting job of Landau. Whether she is rambling incessantly like the madwoman she is, or tittering like a benighted schoolgirl over Angel's near-naked hulk, Drusilla is a formidable and terrifying figure. Not since Lynn Whitfield in *A THIN LINE BETWEEN LOVE AND HATE* has a villain produced such shivers.



Kendra (Blanca Lawson), actually a fellow Slayer from the Caribbean, aids Buffy against Spike in second season's "What's My Line, Part 2."

"There's something a little too clean about this clown."
—Buffy

TED ★★★

12-8-97. Written by David Greenwalt and Joss Whedon. Directed by Bruce Seth Green.

Buffy's mother, Joyce (Kristine Sutherland) has been dating a computer software salesman named Ted (John Ritter.) On the surface, Ted appears to be the perfect Renaissance man: kind, considerate, hard-working, and a superb gourmet cook. For Buffy, though, he appears just a little too perfect. When Ted is alone with her, he shows a very definite abusive streak, one that Joyce refuses to see even when Buffy informs her mother that Ted has threatened her with bodily harm. The seemingly angelic Ted is, in actuality, a robot with a few screws loose. Buffy exposes Ted (and his wires) and dispatches him.

John Ritter does a chilling job as Ted. The

Buffy

HORROR ANGEL

David Boreanaz on moving up to his own spin-off vampire show.

By Mitch Persons

The initial impression that David Boreanaz gives is one of an outspoken nonconformist. His nonconformity is evident immediately—he actually arrives right on time for his interview.

"I don't mess around," Boreanaz said. "I just want to be on time, okay? I don't like running around with a cel phone stuck to my ear, telling people, 'Hey, just one more minute.' I have no time for that Hollywood bullshit. Straight up, man."

Boreanaz' hip irreverence is a little off-putting. When this melts away, he shows himself to be a man of seriousness and introspection. He uses these very real qualities to great advantage in his role as vampire Angel in *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*.

"Early on in the series," he said, "Angel was the type of character who nobody really knew. He was this mysterious guy, sort of an amiable sad sack standing around, for the most part, with his hands in his pockets. As *BUFFY* progressed in storyline he became more complex. In our second season, after he and Buffy made love, he lost his soul and became this evil creature. Now, in the third season, Angel has come back, and he is one messed-up guy. I mean, he's been to Hell, so he's a little insane, and animalistic. It takes some time for him to get his old self back, and Buffy helps him with that, but he's not the same guy he was during the first year.

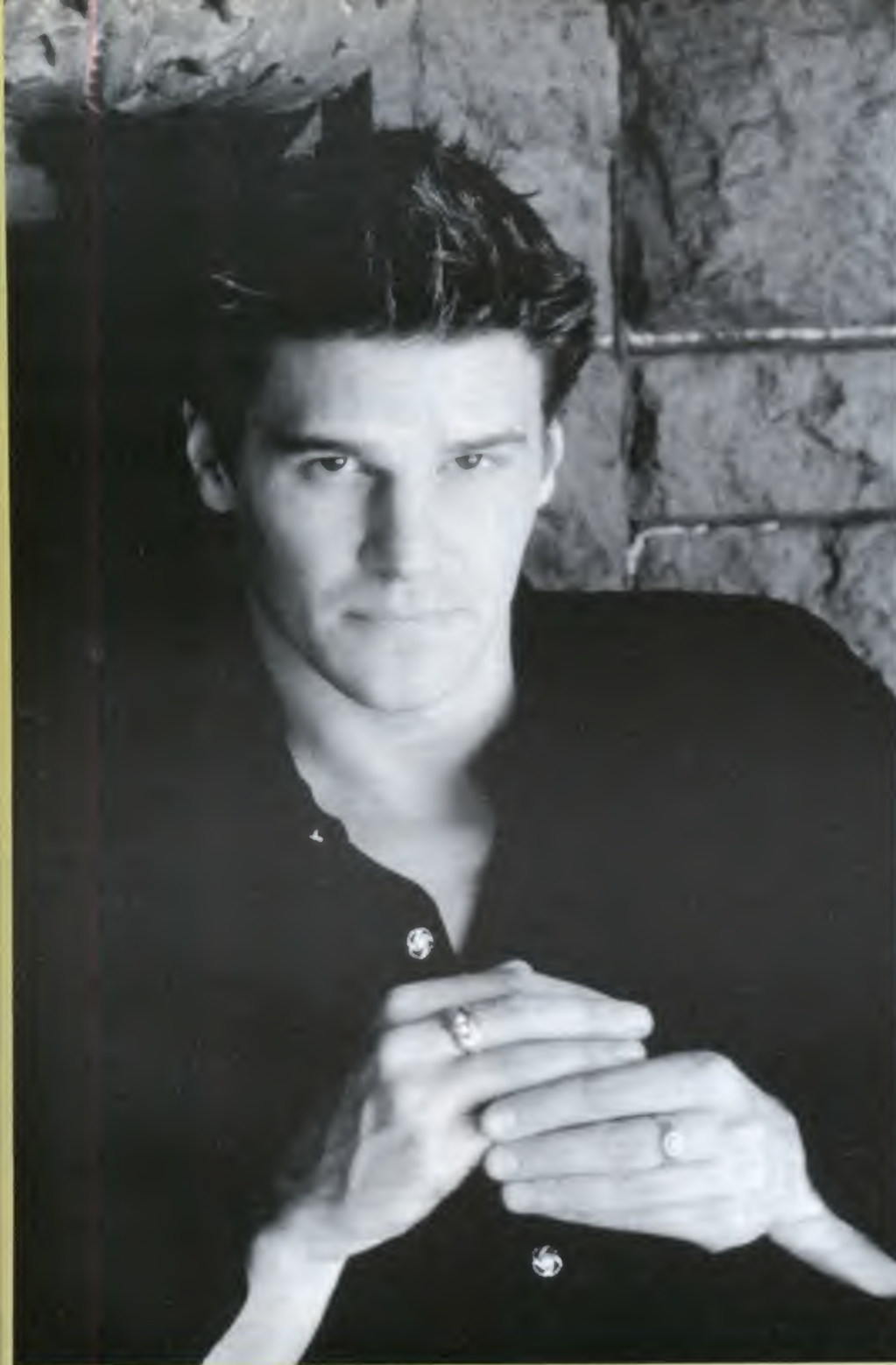
"This character is so confused! I think he's on the verge of being good, and he knows where to go with it, but at the drop of a dime he can revert back to his evil self. This time, though, he knows how to control his evil. When he reverts, he reverts for a reason—he's fighting other vampires and demons.



Opposites attract: Boreanaz as brooding vampire Angel and Sarah Michelle Gellar as the Slayer, falling in love with her prey.

"The transformation of Angel from good guy to bad guy was hard for me, both personally and professionally. I was in tune with Good Angel, but I wasn't coming home for Evil Guy. I think, if you've played a character long enough, you subconsciously carry that character with you into your private life. You can shut it off to an extent, but there's a part of you that still consciously lives with it.

"On the set, it was particularly hard doing scenes with Sarah [Michelle Gellar] because she didn't see Angel as an evil type,



Boreanaz has given Angel complex shadings of both good and evil, and moves his vampire to L.A. next year for his own spin-off private eye series, also created and produced by BUFFY's Joss Whedon.

and all of a sudden there he was. For the most part, the relationship between Buffy and Angel had been almost a BEAUTY AND THE BEAST type of thing. Buffy knew what Angel was, but she still loved him. Then the transition came, and it was hard for her, and also for me, to adjust. To help Sarah with that transition, after each scene I made it a point to confirm to her that, 'I'm here for you, I'm not here against you. This is not who I am.' I believe there has to be a coming-down period where you hug the other actor, or help the other person,

and even help yourself get out of the turmoil that's been created, instead of being submerged in it. As harrowing as that can be sometimes, it's part of the acting process, and one that I would never even think of giving up.

"I'm really going to have a chance to explore that process next year, when I start my own series, ANGEL. It will be on the WB, like BUFFY, and will have David Greenwalt as its executive producer. In the series Angel moves from Buffy's town of Sunnydale to Los Angeles. He is really tortured over what

character manages to have Joyce completely seduced by his solicitous and somewhat unctuous charm. Seconds later, his true psychotic self surfaces in front of her unfortunate offspring. "Ritter was wonderful," said director Bruce Seth Green. "He knew what he wanted to do with his role, and he was on the right track from the beginning. The only problem we had when we were shooting that episode was everyone had the stomach flu. There was one day toward the end of the production, Sarah had it, and John had it, and the majority of the scenes that day were the two of them together. To try to keep them both on the set was impossible."

Gellar's and Ritter's scenes together are truly unsettling. As with last season's "Nightmares," Greenwalt and Whedon make a statement against a devastating social problem. By slamming the monstrous Ted and the naive Buffy against each other, the script brings to light the horror of domestic violence so strongly that the closing moments, with Ted turning on both Buffy and Joyce, and then going completely, mechanically, and frighteningly berserk, seem almost like afterthoughts. BUFFY is, first and foremost, an entertainment, but it can carry a wallop of a message if it wants to.



John Ritter as "Ted," in robot makeup by Optic Nerve, a romantic interest for Buffy's mom who gets unmasked by her Slayer daughter.

"Honestly, Buffy, don't you ever think of anything besides boys and clothes?"

—Joyce

"How about saving the world from evil?"

—Buffy

BAD EGGS

★★ 1/2

1-12-98. Written by Marti Noxon. Directed by David Greenwalt.

As a lesson in responsibility, Buffy's enigmatic Teen Health teacher, Mr. Whitmore (Rick Zieff) assigns pairs of students to act as parents—to unfertilized eggs. What Buffy and her cohorts do not know is that Whitmore is an enslaved tool of a gloopy-looking, one-eyed creature whose goal is to make all humans its servile vessels. It does this by spewing out eggs which then hatch and attach themselves to unsuspecting human hosts. Within short order, all of Sunnydale, (excepting Buffy, of course, who fights off the parasite) is under the control of the creature.

This combination of ALIEN and INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS is fun from start to finish. Who cares if the motives of the creature (which looks like an immense, pulsating glob of cream of wheat) are a little hard to figure out? "I had just gotten my job as a staff writer," said Marti Noxon, "and I had this really elaborate, cockeyed dream about these eggs that had demons in them. I pretty much dreamt the whole storyline, and I thought it was totally wacky, and I had in no way any expectation that Joss would think it would be a good idea for an episode, but I called him up and I said, 'I had this wild dream,' and he said, 'That's great,' and the first thing I knew, that was my first episode. "Most people think that 'What's My Line,



Boreanaz as Angel cradles Gellar as Buffy, killed by the Master in the stunning first season finale "Prophecy Girl."

“Knowing who you are is important. The series ANGEL [says] if you don't know where you are, this is what's going to happen.”

—David Boreanaz, *Angel*—

could also go the other way, and lure in all the BUFFY buffs.

“That's the beauty of working with guys like Joss Whedon and David Greenwalt. You never know which way anything is going to go. For me, that's the real excitement, because I like the unknown. I don't want to know what's going to happen. That's really boring, man, really trite.

“I'm the kind of person who believes in waiting things out until I see where my path takes me. This last summer I had a chance to do a movie role, but then a friend of

mine suggested that I take a trip to Africa, which, on the spur of the moment, I decided to do. I had one of the most spiritual experiences of my life there. Anybody who wants to fight his fears, see the real self, peel all those layers away, be as vulnerable as you can, should go on a trip like that.

“I believe there is a place that's very peaceful in everybody that's very hard to get at. It's almost kind of like, as a surfer, you catch the perfect wave. The Silver Surfer always did. It's like hitting a golf ball very straight and down the beautiful fairway. It's like conducting an orchestra, totally out of your head, you don't know what's going on. It's like being a writer and writing, and not feeling what you're writing, but those words just keep coming out. It's a place. It's a place called The Zone, and it's a great place to be in, but it's very hard to be there constantly because of all the problems and all the bullshit that's around you. We're surrounded by it constantly, whether it be violence, or media, or family problems, or personal problems. Those things can wear a person down, or the entertainment industry has a beautiful way of taking people, chewing them up, and spitting them out as fast as they can. Being in tune with yourself, knowing who you are is very important.

“I think it's also a statement for Angel's character: to be able to know who he is, and where he's going to go with the knowledge. With the series ANGEL, I believe that's the one thing, hopefully, that will come across to people that live the truth. If you don't know where you are, this is what's going to happen.” □



The roboticized residents of Sunnydale, picks and shovels in hand, march into the lair of the one-eyed blob in second season's "Bad Eggs."

Part 1' was my first scripted BUFFY episode. When the production staff finds it has new writers, they usually assign them a script that's a little further in. The first script is sort of a test script. They see what you can do, and how long it takes you to get it. So, I think a lot of times, just being cautious, they won't give you a script that's really early on in the season, just in case it needs a lot of work. That's what happened with me. They gave me 'Bad Eggs' just to test me, and then once they felt that I was getting the feel of the show, they started giving me episodes before that.”

“Just because Buffy saved the world and everything, we don't have to make a big deal over her.”

—Cordelia

SURPRISE (Part 1 of 2)

★ 1/2

1-19-98. Written by Marti Noxon. Directed by Michael Lange.

Buffy's surprise 17th birthday party is interrupted by the arrival of a demon known as The Judge (Brian Thompson,) whose very touch can kill. Angel and Buffy invade the hideout of the Judge in order to exterminate him. Instead, they wind up his prisoners. Just as the monster is about to put the whammy on Buffy, she kicks him in the tender mercies and, with Angel in tow, makes her escape. Later that evening, Buffy and Angel, both exhausted, tumble into bed together and make love. When Angel awakes the next morning, he appears to be in a frenzy of agony. He winds up rolling in a gutter, moaning Buffy's name.

This first of a two-part BUFFY episode was touted as “The one you have to see.” It certainly has its moments, (most of them coming from the tongue-in-cheek performance of Brian Thompson as The Judge,) but the overall effect is scattered and disjointed. There are several exchanges involving Ms. Calendar (Robia La Morte) and a mysterious Gypsy uncle (Vincent Schiavelli) that are supposed

The Judge vaporizes bookwormish vampire Eric Dalet in "Surprise," briefly interrupting the festivities of Buffy's surprise 17th birthday party.



Buffy

OPTIC NERVE

John Vulich and Todd McIntosh on realizing ambitious makeups on a TV schedule and budget.

By Mitch Persons

If one did not know that John Vulich was president of Optic Nerve, the company that provides prosthetics, suits, animatronic puppets, special makeup, and vampire masks for *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*, one would swear he or she was in the presence of an educator. Vulich is articulate, knowledgeable, and possessed of a voracious appetite for research. Even the way he describes his work takes on a bit of a pedagogical tone. "What we do at Optic

Nerve isn't necessarily an end to itself. With us, it's all about storytelling. When we read a *BUFFY* script, we oftentimes have to decipher how it is that what we're building helps to tell the story, and frequently a character is presented early on in a different way than it is later, like sometimes a character might appear to be evil, and ends up becoming benevolent later, or vice-versa. You might think that this is a

nice guy, but later on, it's an evil creature, and we must be able to teeter in either direction, depending upon the actor's interpretation. For me, the bottom line is always about the storytelling and how we at Optic Nerve can add to that telling."

Vulich is aided in his efforts by Todd McIntosh. "My official title," said McIntosh, "is 'Makeup Supervisor.' I'm sort of a liaison for all of the things that go on with everything from beauty makeups right through to the prosthetics. Since *BUFFY* is a union show, and Optic Nerve is non-union, I find myself running between the office and the set a great deal. Even though John and I are old friends, I was actually on

The Gill Man, a full body suit designed and built by Optic Nerve for third season's "Go Fish," as Sunnydale High's swim coach infuses his team with fish DNA, complex makeup on a weekly basis.



John Vulich, Optic Nerve owner and makeup designer.





Angel (David Boreanaz) kisses Spike (James Marsters) in obelssance, after losing his soul in "Surprise," giving Boreanaz a meatier role.

to be harbingers of bad things for Buffy. The scenes, which appear to have been dropped in from another show entirely, are completely lacking in tension. The only real perk of the episode comes at the end, with Angel going ballistic in the streets. "'Surprise' did give David [Boreanaz] more to do as an actor," claimed Whedon. "He's not just standing around feeling sorry for himself, which he had to do a lot in the previous shows.

"Buffy made me feel like a human being. That's not the kind of thing you just forgive."

—Angel

INNOCENCE (Part 2 of 2)

★★

1-20-98. Written and directed by Joss Whedon.

Angel's strange behavior is due to an old Gypsy curse, which is related by Ms. Calendar: "If Angel achieves true happiness, even just a moment of it, he will lose his soul." That moment of happiness, presumably, was when Angel and Buffy made love. Angel, who has taken up residence with Spike and Drusilla, is now a 100% bad guy, with a malicious streak that would make the Marquis De Sade sit up and take notice. He is out for Buffy's blood, but not before trying to make her life, and the lives of those around her, a living torture chamber. However, Buffy is still The Slayer, and must destroy The Judge, who has invaded a shopping mall and is zapping innocent bystanders right and left.

David Boreanaz is believable as the now-evil Angel. Unfortunately, Gellar, who has previously demonstrated extraordinary acting, here appears to be tackling an emotional level she just cannot reach. Her pain and disappointment over finding out the man she loves has reverted are effective enough in the first scenes, but they stay at that same level throughout the show. Her constant melancholy expression conjures up annoyance, and

Angel, the vampire with a heart, gone bad, has Willow by the throat in "Innocence," creator Joss Whedon's most darkly pessimistic episode.



the BUFFY set before his company was. I don't get paid by Optic Nerve, I get paid by the network, so I suppose you could say that John and I work independently, but symbiotically."

"Symbiotically," Vulich chuckled. "That's a word that most people, looking at my school record, would think I wouldn't understand. I was a school dropout. Dropped out of my last year of high school to go to work on a FRI-DAY THE 13TH movie. And I wasn't a poor student, either. When I was about ten years old, I got accepted into a school honor program. When I was accepted into this program I felt it was like they were using us to test out schools for other children, kind of like keeping books, or running card systems. They had us testing things out. It was almost at that point, like in THE WIZARD OF OZ, where you go behind a curtain, and discover a charlatan instead of a savior. I just lost all interest then. I guess maybe it had been a game at that point, and I felt I had won it. That was when I started to get interested in movies, and art, and making my own films. Also, part of my interest might have been due to the fact that I was an only child, a latchkey kid, and developed a strong affinity for fantasy and fantasy films. A lot of only children have 'imaginary playmates.' I had my films to keep me company. I was so entertained by movies that I wanted to be part of the process; I wanted to entertain others.

"It was working on the FRI-DAY THE 13TH film as a makeup artist that made me decide to form my own company. Optic Nerve has been in existence about seven years now. The first film we did was one called SPIRITS. Our second film was the remake of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, and then we did [George] Romero's THE DARK HALF.

"Ever since BUFFY, though, we've gotten somehow typecast as television artists. Part of that is due to people knowing that you can deliver, particularly in

“Ever since BUFFY we're typecast as television artists. On TV, you are going with your first instinct, which is often the best.”

—John Vulich, Makeup Design—



The corpse of James Stanley (Christopher Gorham) in third season's macabre "I Only Have Eyes For You."

will pick one of them instead of agonizing over and over, because they realize that there isn't time to do that.

"We try to avoid artistic cliches as much as possible. In BUFFY, we are dealing with a whole repertoire of classic monsters. We've had a werewolf, a mummy, and The Creature from the Black Lagoon. All of these creatures have become standardized, done very well sometimes, and very badly oftentimes. We'll try to see what's been done before, what worked, what didn't work, and how we can make it different. In





John Ritter in third season's "Ted" (left) and Der Kindestod in "Killed By Death" (right), a creature that sucks the life out of sick children.

'Some Assembly Required,' we had to turn a high school football hero, Daryl, into a Frankenstein Monster. One of the ideas that we came up with was, we were looking at a book that was compiled by an underground photographer by the name of John Peter Witkins, and he had a compilation that he had just edited of Civil War injuries, or just some really bizarre book, and one of the pictures was of a man in a head brace, almost a torture-device-looking thing, like a metal band across the head, and all these kind of metal bars, mechanical joints and

everything, holding his jaw together. I thought it really had a neat look to it, very bizarre. I felt it would kind of lend itself to this Frankenstein, so we almost verbatim photocopied it, and pieced it together with the drawings we were doing, the scar tissue and all that. We showed our work to Joss Whedon, *BUFFY*'s producer, and he said, 'No, I think it's too much. Daryl has to be appealing and likeable; he's more a victim than a monster, so we have to be very subtle and natural. Don't get me wrong, John, this is very cool, just tone it down a bit.' I guess

Joss felt the look wasn't appropriate for the character, so we went ahead and modified it some, made Daryl a little more human-looking.

"We had a little more leeway with Moloch, the demon in *I ROBOT, YOU JANE*. We showed our sketches to Joss, and he said, 'Go with it.' Moloch was supposed to be made of metal, but the costume was actually a combination of two materials, L-200 and L-300, which are like curathane foam—very dense, yet still flexible. A lot of our costumes are difficult to get into, but

Robin Atkin Downs as Machida in second season's "Reptile Boy." Optic Nerve's Michael Pack (l) adds finishing touches with shop supervisor Mark Garbarino (r).





Mike Deak in *Optic Nerve's* design for the demon Moloch in first season's "I Robot, You Jane."

fortunately for the actor playing Moloch, his wasn't one of them. There was a zipper and some snaps in the back, and all he had to do was pop in, get snapped up, and he was done."

Noted McIntosh, "John is always trying to get his suits and costumes as close-fitting to the actor as possible. He does that for a two-fold reason. One, he doesn't necessarily want it to look like somebody is wearing a costume. He achieves that by making masks and suits that are tight to the head and body, so it doesn't look like, say, a man in an ape suit. Second, the more a costume conforms to the shape of an actor's body,

the more he or she begins to get into the character. Makeup can go just so far; it's only going to be as good as an actor's ability to perform in it."

"*Optic Nerve* is not all makeup," concluded Vulich, "even though it comprises the bulk of our work. Last season there was a segment called 'Puppet,' which had a ventriloquist's dummy as a character. *Optic Nerve* supplied the dummy. Originally, we were going to build it, but there was an extremely tight schedule for that episode. We went looking for an existing ventriloquist's dummy. The ones that we liked were somewhat expensive, but the expense wasn't

“Makeup can go just so far; it's only going to be as good as an actor's ability to perform in it. We take the performer into consideration.”

—John Vulich, *Makeup Design*—

quite so much a problem as the dummies we saw were already copyrighted, or were ones that audiences might recognize. There was one in particular, a 1920's design, very elegant, sort of Charlie McCarthy-ish, and we really wanted to get it, but we were afraid that showing it would be a copyright infringement. We settled for a more generic-looking one, which we ended up modifying, anyway.

"What we did was, we took the dummy, and we put some radio-controlled parts in it, so that the actor playing the dummy could be freed up to concentrate more on his acting. The actor did control the head, but we manipulated the mouth, the eyes, and the eyebrows.

"Even though *Optic Nerve* is technically oriented, we always manage to take the performing artist into consideration. It's hard enough for an actor to remember his lines, hit his mark, and show his character's feelings. He doesn't need the added burden of trying to figure out how to operate a remote-controlled wooden doll." □

Seth Green as Oz (r) in phase 1 werewolf makeup in third season's "Phases." Below: *Optic Nerve* makeup artist Greg Funk applies phase 2.



Optic Nerve designer John Wheaton sculpts phase 3. Bottom: The werewolf underskull shows the complex wiring and mechanics of the design.



not the empathy that the script seems to be calling for. This is the darkest, most pessimistic show that Whedon has written so far.

"Is Cousin Geordie a werewolf?...uh-huh...and how long has that been goin' on?...No, no reason... Love to Uncle Ken."

—Oz, speaking into telephone

PHASES

★★★

1-27-98. Written by Rob Des Hotel and Dean Batali. Directed by Bruce Seth Green. Werewolf costume by Optic Nerve.

Oz (Seth Green,) after having been bitten by his obnoxious little cousin Geordie, turns into a werewolf.

"Because of time and budget constraints," relates Optic Nerve president John Vulich, "Oz's werewolf suit, which ordinarily would have taken two months to build, we built in about three weeks for about a third of the money that you would have for something like that. We worked with Todd McIntosh, the makeup artist. He did the actual application of the various werewolf pieces. He is eminently good at what he does.



"The Werewolf of Phases," a state-of-the-art suit designed by Optic Nerve, giving the series feature film quality effects on a TV schedule and budget.

"The werewolf costume was designed to be in two stages before the actual suit," said McIntosh, "so there was phase one, phase two, and then there's the wolf suit. Phases one and two both fell into my area; I applied the phase one makeup on Seth. It was fairly complicated, because although the face appliance is simple, we actually hand-laid the body hair in its early stages. That took quite a long time. By hand-laid I mean that we took individual hairs in a handful, ran them through a combing device, mixed them for color, and then applied them to the face directly, using glue. It gives a very realistic effect. You can make what we like to call 'thin hair things' happen. You can see skin through it.

"Phase two was in itself a two-part process. The first part was constructing a more complicated face piece. I had five people helping me on that one: Mike Mills, Greg Fox, Mark Shostrom, Gerald Quist, and Jeremy Swann. They all worked on this one makeup, which was sort of PLANET OF THE APES-y with a tongue attached into it, and full hairpieces that were faced around the face. The second part was putting finger extensions on every finger, blending those into the skin. Phases 1, 2a, and 2b, took about six hours."

"Poor Seth," continued Vulich, "all he went through. And he was only one of the people playing the werewolf. Keith Campbell doubled for Seth in most of the action shots, and I think there was a stuntman involved with the morph scene, the one in which, after the night of terror, the werewolf wakes up as Oz. That morph turned out really nice. There were three different makeups, and you don't notice necessarily a stop between any of the stages. It was all very fluid. The original shot was supposed to be a lot more

Buffy

RUPERT GILES

Anthony Stewart Head on his Van Helsing role as teen counselor.

By Mitch Persons

Watching the character of Rupert Giles emerge on WB's *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER* is almost like watching the Cheshire Cat in Disney's animated *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*. Like that fanciful animal, Giles' character magically appears one piece at a time. Giles was first seen as a bookish and mild-mannered mentor/guardian to Buffy. Suddenly, he became a man with a past in the episode "The Dark Age" (11-10-97), then later on, a vengeance-crazed lunatic hell-bent for the blood of the man who murdered his true love in "Passion" (2-24-98).

When Anthony Stewart Head, the very personable man who plays Giles, was asked if there are going to be any more sides to his character in *BUFFY*'S third season, he answered wryly, "If there are, they'll lead to conflict. I can guarantee that. Things will not be easy.

"Part of our producer, Joss Whedon's—how can I say it—genius, maybe, or cleverness, is that he manages to tap into the human psyche and come up with all these unexpected twists and turns and character developments that leave everyone breathless. In one episode, "I Only Have Eyes For You," Giles believes that he hears the voice of his dead love, Jenny Calendar, calling to him. It turns out, of course, that he is completely wrong. Now, if Joss just went with, yes, it's the ghost of Jenny, the story wouldn't have gone anywhere. No conflict. Also, it added more paths to the character of Giles, gave him more depth.

"That depth, the conflict, the human relationships, are what I believe makes *BUFFY* so fascinating. *BUFFY* is not just a horror show, it's not just a comedy show,



Head as Giles, the Watcher, the bookish, mild-mannered mentor and guardian, with Buffy, his Slayer charge.

it's about how we all have these conflicts, and how we deal with them. That's what life is about, is dealing with conflicts, and coming through the other side of that, and learning from your experience. Because *BUFFY* is set in a high school, it's kind of under a microscope. That was the whole thing about high school, one was learning how to deal with people, and how to deal with each other, with your emotions, your sexual feelings; everything is thrown into relief in high school.

"Now being English, I don't think my fellow countrymen have quite gotten that yet. The English see *BUFFY*, and they see it as a teen show, which it's not. The series does appeal to teens because the main protagonists are high school students, and they see a lot of issues being dealt with, but there are also a lot of adult issues that are played out.

"I also think that my compatriots haven't latched onto the fantasy elements of the show. As an actor, that is probably one of the most difficult things for me to bring across—to make people believe the unbelievable. It can be done, but it has to start with a deep conviction that what is happening is real. Now, I don't find it hard to believe in that reality. If I'm called on to be in love with a man, as an actor, I do that. It doesn't mean that I'm necessarily in love with a man, but I take the feelings of love that I do have and I project them on whatever the character is. If I have to be

scared by a vampire or a demon, it's not too far to think that there's something dark and sinister out there.

"By the way, despite what I'm saying, I don't really think acting is necessarily a gift. I think anybody could probably do it, given a bit of time and a bit of thought. It's not a special thing. If what is on the printed page appears real, then anybody can make that come to life. The thing that would stop most people from doing that is themselves. They would say, 'I can't do that, I can't do that,' in which case they wouldn't be able to. But if they think to themselves, 'I can do this, I can do this,' then they do it. We should always believe that everything is a possibility.

"When I do speak of acting gifts, I think the greatest is being able to make dialogue work. That's very hard. But when you're given as good dialogue as we have been in *BUFFY*, it's not too difficult. Most of my stuff is telling the story, explaining the plot. People say, 'Well, how do you manage to do it?' I just believe in who I am and what I'm saying. It's just like reading a book. When you believe in a book, and you believe in the characters, you get so caught up

“If I have to be scared by a vampire or a demon, as an actor, it's not too far to think that there's something dark and sinister out there.”

—Anthony Stewart Head, Giles—



Anthony Stewart Head as Sunnydale High's librarian, adding dynamic character shadings third season.

in it that by the end, you feel you know these characters, and you feel let down, the fact that you're not going to see them again, that you're going to have to say goodbye. The same way, when you're reading a script, or you're playing a role, especially something in a recurring role that has had two years to develop and be nurtured, and has gone through so many emotional ups and downs as Giles has, it becomes part of your life, part of your psyche. Giles has become a real human being. Knowing that, I love it when Joss or David [Greenwalt] or Marti [Noxon, the coproducer] ask, 'What can we do with him now? Where's he going next?'"

As to where Head himself is going next, he has some very definite plans. "I'm producing an animated film called *DARK SECRETS*. It's going to be a fantasy/musical along the lines of *THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW*. I've always been a big fan of that show, and not too long ago I realized that there hasn't been a musical like that in quite a number of years. I co-wrote the book with another Englishman, Matthew Bell, and I wrote all the 15 songs. It's a strong story, fairly dark, but funny. It also deals with something that I believe has never been touched on before—at least not in a musical.

"My agents tried to sell *DARK SECRETS* as a straight live show, but they weren't having too much luck. Then, one day, I was talking to a man I had met in a restaurant named Scott De Las Cassas. I mentioned that I was having some difficulty selling *DARK SECRETS*. It turned out that Scott was an animation producer. He showed some interest in the script, said he wanted to see it. After he read it he said, 'You know, this may just work as an animated film.' "Many might say that my meeting Scott was just happenstance, but I don't think so. I'm a great believer in things occurring for a reason. Whatever life hands us is meant to happen, like my running into Scott, or my being cast as Rupert Giles. I have every conviction that life will give us whatever lessons and/or gifts we need to have at the right place and at the right time." □

elaborate,—the morph was going to start around the stomach area—but it was just too hard to do, so they ended up with just the upper torso shot."



Oz (Seth Green) morphs back into his human form at the conclusion of "Phases," on set makeup application by Todd McIntosh.

"Xander, what's going on? Who died and left you Elvis?"

—Cordelia

BEWITCHED, BOTHERED AND BEWILDERED ★★★★★

2-10-98. Written by Marti Noxon. Directed by James A. Contner.

The 1992 film *LOVE POTION NO. 9* tells the story of a tonic that, once swallowed, has the power to drive the opposite sex love-crazy. "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered" might be described as *LOVE POTION NO. 9* with muscles. It is also the finest *BUFFY* episode of the second season.

Both stories start out as pleasing little comedies. Unlike the theatrical film, though, "Bewitched..." builds to an unexpected comic nightmare. When Xander faces the hoard of ravenously amorous and dangerous women, the viewer doesn't know whether to laugh or gasp. Xander, furious and confused at being spurned by Cordelia, decides to seek revenge. He goes to see Amy (Elizabeth Anne Allen), who has inherited her mother's witch powers (see Season One "Witch") to cast a love spell over Cordelia.

Much credit has to go to the writing and the direction, but there are performances here that don't exist in any other *BUFFY* segment. Robin La Morte, who usually plays Ms. Calendar as a jittery prude (except in "The Dark Ages") becomes a Marlene Dietrich-type seductress. Gellar (when she isn't running around as a rat) is at her sexiest and naughtiest. The comic/tragic performance of Brendon, however, dominates everything and everyone. His self-effacing actor originally portrayed Xander as a one-dimensional wimp. Now Xander is seen as a complex sympathetic, and at times, heroic figure.

Buffy vamps Xander (Nicholas Brendon) in "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," as a love potion for Cordelia backfires with comic results.



Buffy

MARTI NOXON

The show's co-producer and staff writer on the special pleasure she takes in working in horror.

By Mitch Persons

The normally reserved Joss Whedon positively gushes when he talks about *BUFFY* co-producer and staff writer Marti Noxon:

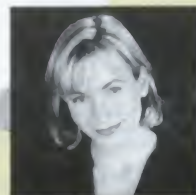
"She can write the shit out of this show! She's good and she's efficient. She's got this show in her blood in such a way that it sometimes puts more experienced writers to shame. Before Marti came on board, David [Greenwalt,] Rob Des Hotel, Dean Batali, Ty King, and I were carrying the bulk of the workload. Now I know that if we get in a bind, and we do, more often than not, I can always go to Marti and she can produce a good script in a very short amount of time. She is an absolute lifesaver."

Noxon herself is a little more low-key in describing her place within Whedon's Mutant Enemy Productions. "I wrote six episodes last season. Part of the reason I did so many is because we were trying to figure out who was working and who was not working. Some of our writers live out of town, like Ty King, who lives in Seattle, and is more of a consultant writer. Also, last year we had one man who didn't work out, and he left right away. We also had a consulting producer whose own pilot sold right in the middle of all this, so he didn't stick around. He only wrote half an episode, then took off. Rob and Dean had already been on the show for one season, and I think they were considering moving on. That left David, Joss, and myself. That's not very many people. When you come right down to the crux of the matter, I was really the only one besides Joss and David who was left.

"I was nervous, because *BUFFY* was actually my first staff job. My father, Nicholas Noxon, is the head of National Geographic Documentary Division, and I used to hang around him all the time when I was a kid, because I always knew that I wanted to do



Adding a feminine touch: Xander (Nicholas Brendon) and Buffy fall in love in second season's "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered." Noxon (Inset) has a taste for the macabre.



something in the film business. But I found out that I really didn't want to be a documentary person—I found it very frustrating watching and waiting for animals to do things. I wanted to give them direction. I went to film school at UC Santa Cruz, and when I graduated I just worked in a bunch of different jobs in the industry, mostly as an assistant to a writer and then to a writer/producer, and I just wrote a lot. I did spec scripts, both feature and television. I actually did have one produced, and that was for the show *LIFE GOES ON*. About three years ago I got signed by one of the bigger agencies for television and talent,

and they passed my material to Joss at *BUFFY*. I met with Joss and David, and I thought it had gone miserably, and I was never going to get the job. I couldn't tell if they liked me, but much to my delight, they did.

"I think one of the reasons they liked me was because I had a real taste for the macabre. When I was writing spec scripts, most of them were ghost stories, or had some sort of supernatural element in them. One of the specs I wrote was for *THE X-FILES*. I love that show. I have always been obsessed with ghost stories, and it seemed that David and Joss were able to pick that up. That is why *BUFFY* was such a great fit for me.

"They could also sense that I've had a love of the dramatic genre, episodic shows like *MY SO-CALLED LIFE* and *PARTY OF FIVE*. But I expressed to them my opinion that those kinds of series can overstay their welcome, because the people are always so overwrought. Taking straight drama and mixing it with horror/comedy, as David and Joss did with *BUFFY*, was my all-time favorite kind of writing.

"One thing that viewers may have noticed about our second season, and now our third, is that the segments, although still stressing the tongue-in-cheek elements of horror, had taken on that more serious and episodic quality. When you take a look at *BUFFY*'s first season, there were more stand-alone episodes—stories that dealt with different monsters, demons, and so forth. You had the same recurring characters, but the show wasn't as dependent on those characters as they are now. Even so, we try to lighten things up if we feel that the story is getting a little too intense, or too ponderous. A joke from Xander, an insult from Cordelia, or a twisted homily from Willow, and the ten-



Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar) comes to grips with a Sunnydale High swim team member who has undergone a fishy DNA mutation in "Go Fish."

sion is dispersed. We're always very conscious of that, and even though the tone may now be darker, and the emotions of the characters deeper and more somber, there's still a whole lot to laugh about.

"For me personally, the emotional substance of *BUFFY* is very real. I don't think I'm alone in that assessment, either. People respond to it, even if they don't always know what's going on. This is particularly true for our younger audiences, the eight- to ten-year olds. Sometimes that worries me. I expressed this to Joss one time in one of our breakdown meetings. I definitely considered 'Passion,' with its grisly murder, an episode that was not for younger viewers. One of my favorite segments last year was 'Lie To Me,' about the boy who wanted to become a vampire. That too, was a little dark, a little too disturbing for an eight-year-old kid, but we do have that audience. Sometimes I think, 'Oh, isn't that great?' and other times I think, 'I hope their parents are watching with them.' Certain episodes are great for them, and there's no problem, but others I think approach such adult themes that you just hope someone is there to talk to them about what that really means, so they don't get too scared. If I had seen some of those episodes when I was a kid, I would not have left the house. A couple of them, like Angel killing Jenny in 'Passion,' I think would have sent me to sleep in my mom's bed for

about a month.

"The killing off of Jenny was one of those surprises that we keep coming up with to keep our viewers on their toes. In one of the episodes I wrote, coincidentally titled 'Surprise,' Jenny turns out to be a gypsy with a vendetta against Angel. That was an idea that just grew on its own; it wasn't something that Joss, David and I were purposely planning on. I don't think we even thought, at the outset, that Jenny was going to be connected to Angel in any way, but it soon became obvious that she was.

"That's the wonderful thing about learning from Joss. His mind is completely open to change. The characters are always allowed to do things that are unexpected. I think that's why our audience is fairly loyal, because they don't know what's going to happen, and sometimes neither do we! If I have learned something, and something that Joss is teaching me as a writer is, never be afraid of the big reversal, the dramatic event. I'm sure viewers would be devastated if they knew how tenuous some of their favorite characters were. When Joss told us Angel was going to murder Jenny, I stood up and said, 'No! You can't do that to us!' And Joss was so pleased, because that was just the reaction he was looking for—you know, something strong and emotional. So our characters are always turning out to be involved in stuff that I didn't think they were going to be involved in. But it's not always by design. A lot of times, as with 'Gypsy Jenny,' we go, 'Ooh, wouldn't this be cool? Let's do it.'

"This is what happened with another one of my scripts, 'Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered.' We had originally planned for the episode to be more slapstick than it actually was—a love spell, girls chasing Xander all over the place, and him loving it. But it just wasn't working. Finally I flashed on the idea of Cordelia initially rejecting Xander. When he goes to the witch for the spell,

“The emotional substance of *BUFFY* is real. People respond to it even if they don't always know what's going on.”

—Co-producer, Marti Noxon—

he isn't acting out of love. He wants revenge. He wants to reject the girl who has rejected him.

"The episode worked, I think, because I was able to bring my female perspective to the story. I know how it feels to be hurt like Xander was. I also know how it feels when you have this mad teenage crush on a boy.

You feel you would do anything to keep him. That's how we ended up with all the women of the town literally fighting tooth and nail over Xander. I've been able to bring my experiences to the show, a girl's outlook on things. Not that Joss doesn't understand that, because for a man, he understands a woman's viewpoint better than anybody I've ever known who is male. But I definitely think that there have been moments where I've said, 'Gee, girls just don't do that,' or, 'Yeah, she would do that.'

"I can venture to say that I have used my experience to punch up the relationship between Xander and Cordelia. It's kind of pathetic, in a way, because their constant feuding, then making up, is very close to how my own romantic life was. Joss has often said to me, 'Marti, if you had had a happy teenager-hood, you wouldn't be here.'

"Joss didn't know it when he said that, but he was getting to the real heart of the show, the thing that I really love about it. These people, Buffy, Oz, Xander, Willow, Cordelia, they are teenagers. They make mistakes—and they should, for emotional reasons. They do stuff that isn't very smart, just as most of us do when we are that age. When I was trying to decide if I wanted to take this job, which wasn't a very hard decision, but I hadn't seen the show, so I was watching the episode 'Angel,' when Buffy is fighting Angel at the very end, and then she bares her neck to him, and says, 'Go ahead, take me, if you can, go ahead and kill me, if you can.' I thought, this is the coolest thing

I've ever seen, because she's the hero, but she's an adolescent, and she's going to make decisions sometimes out of total emotion, out of passion, as opposed to her head, which makes it that much more interesting. And that's one of the things I love about these characters, they're fighting evil, but they're still teenagers. When Xander did his spell, he wasn't making a good decision, he was making a rotten decision, for rotten, selfish, stupid reasons, which is pretty much the biography of a person of years 13 through 25, including yours truly." □

Buffy senses something wrong with John Ritter as "Ted," her mom's new boyfriend, a second season show by Joss Whedon and David Greenwalt.



"That's the thing about our cast," said creator-producer Joss Whedon. "They can go from extremely subtle comedy to very, very intense drama at the drop of a hat. Nicky was hilarious in this episode, but he was also extremely powerful. We also got a great performance from Robin, who was a scream. You don't really know which way any of these people are going to go."

"We had four days to write 'Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered,' because Sarah was doing SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE, and we had to come up with a show in which she didn't appear that much. That's why she got turned into a rat. It was one of those things that just fell together, and it turned out to be one of our best episodes."

"Passion: it lies in all of us, sleeping, waiting, and though unwanted, unbidden, it will stir, open its jaws, and howl."

—Angel

PASSION

★★★★1/2

2-24-98. Written by Ty King. Directed by Michael E. Gershman.

Jenny Calendar, in an effort to help Angel, visits a local Gypsy magic shop where she purchases a round crystal known as The Orb of Thesulah. With the proper incantation, the Orb has the power to restore a person's lost soul. Angel likes being his original demonic self and kills the unfortunate teacher by savagely breaking her neck, and smashing her computer program to solve the incantation. In a particularly ghoulish move, Angel places the body of Jenny in Giles' bed.



Buffy comforts Giles at the grave of Ms. Calendar, slain by Angel in "Passion," a stand-out performance by Anthony Stewart Head as Giles.

The "passion" of the title is not Angel's demented one for Buffy, or Ms. Calendar's normal one for the soul of Angel. The passion is Giles' love for Jenny. Anthony Stewart Head, no slouch of an actor to begin with, gives his best performance to date as the grief-stricken Giles. Toward the end of the show, when he tearfully collapses into Buffy's arms, his pain is so intense that it manages to reach out and hold the viewer in a wrenching spasm of despair. "It's my favorite episode," said Head. "It was extraordinary in that it tapped some very basic human emotions. On all levels it presented a really interesting challenge for everyone involved. There was some beautiful playing by everybody in the show, and it still gives me little chills to think about it, because it was an episode that, once and for all, went all the way, and crossed the line of predictability. To take a sympathetic character like Angel, who was very popular, and turn him into a baddie, it's very dynamic television. Jenny was also extremely popular. People were hoping she would be a mainstay of the cast, but she was suddenly killed off. That's part of Joss' genius."

"This was a very dark episode," pointed out David Boreanaz, "but I really enjoyed the scenes. I remember the computer scene, where Angel comes in and smashes the computer, throws it



Angel (David Boreanaz) holds the glowing Orb of Thesulah in second season's "Passion," afraid of the power it offers to restore his lost soul.

down, and throws the Orb of Thesulah up against the wall. That was a fun scene to play, man. I was so jazzed on that. Everything seemed to flow, and it was great working with Robia. She's a wonderful actress and we just kind of got there and Michael [Gershman, the director] just let us have fun, and did some things that were really cool."

"'Passion' was a beautifully constructed piece all around," continued Head, "Ty King, who is not one of our regular staff, did a phenomenal writing job. I liked the way he started off with a jaunty 'Hey, we're going to make this a more optimistic, feel-better episode,' with Jenny coming to Angel's rescue, and then all of a sudden it just went whoa! It went into a roller-coaster which just didn't let go. It really shook people up."

A good deal of the shaking up was due not only to King's script, but also to the considerable dramatic talents of Gellar and Hannigan. Buffy and Willow learn of Jenny's death via a telephone call. Photographed through a steamy window, we hear hardly a sound from the two girls, only the expressions on their faces, their bodies twisted with sobs of disbelief.

"Buffy, if Death asks you to play chess, don't even do it. The guy's like, a whiz."

—Xander

KILLED BY DEATH

★★★

3-3-98. Written by Rob Des Hotel and Dean Batali. Directed by Deran Sarafian.

Buffy is in the hospital recovering from the flu and a tussle with Angel. On her first night, she has a vision of a hideous creature stalking the children's ward. She believes that she has seen Death. The girl discovers, however, that the hallucination is a creature called Der Kindestod, which sucks the life out of sick children.

A good mixture of horror and comedy. The show abounds with bizarre characters and witty lines. Der Kindestod (James Jude Courtney) looks like a cross between Freddy Kreuger and The Tall Man from the PHANTASM films.

James Jude Courtney as Der Kindestod, makeup by Optic Nerve, in "Killed By Death," as the spectre haunting the lives of sick children.



Actor Willie Garson does a great comic turn as a shallow-pated hospital security guard.

"A person just doesn't wake up and stop loving somebody."

—James Stanley, the ghost.

I ONLY HAVE EYES FOR YOU

★★★★1/2

4-28-98. Written by Marti Noxon. Directed by James Whitmore, Jr.

Ghosts from the past haunt Sunnydale High in this touchingly dramatic love story from beyond the grave, written by Marti Noxon. Giles imagines he hears the voice of his dear departed Jenny only to witness George the school janitor (John Hawkes) shoot teacher Ms. Frank (Miriam Flynn). A troubled Buffy has flashbacks to when, in 1955, a music teacher named Grace Newman (Merideth Salenger) and a student, James Stanley (Christopher Gorham) fell in love. While Newman was in her classroom listening to a recording of "I Only Have Eyes for You," Stanley broke in, and, after a violent verbal exchange, shot her dead. Willow theorizes that it is the restless ghosts of these two people that are possessing others in the school, and must be exorcised so they can find peace.



Ghostly James (Christopher Gorham) confronts the ghost of teacher Grace Newman (Merideth Salenger) in "I Only Have Eyes For You."

In the cafeteria, the food bank turns into a mass of twisting, poisonous snakes. The police chief (Brian Reddy) informs Principal Snyder that the mayor of the city is unhappy about all the bizarre incidents that are taking place in Sunnydale.

Buffy and Angel find themselves reliving the ghostly tragedy, except it is Angel who speaks Ms. Newman's words, and Buffy, James'. This time, instead of a shooting, there is a wild, passionate embrace, at which time the ghosts go to their final rest.

Said scriptwriter Noxon, "I've always had this ghost obsession, and I was just dying to do a ghost story. It was Joss, though, who came up with that brilliant twist at the end, where Buffy becomes the guy instead of the girl, and Angel becomes the girl, and you just don't expect that. With this story we knew we were trying to do an episode that was more dramatic and more complicated than our usual, but that is what is so great about the show, he's willing to do that—to take an episode and give it a different flavor."

Noted Tony Head, who plays Giles, "It is also a tribute to Joss' skill as a writer, that he is able to delve into the human soul. Giles is certain that the voice he hears is Jenny's, but like a good many emotionally traumatized people, the 'feeling' that he has turns out to be completely wrong. Joss inserted that bit because it gave more poignancy to Giles, knowing that he was mistaken. That gave the story a back plot, something to work against. If Joss went, 'Yeah, okay, let's have it be the ghost of Jenny,' the story wouldn't go anywhere. There would be no friction."

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Buffy

DIGITAL MAGIC

Devising CGI horror solutions for the show's post-production special effects.

By Mitch Persons

"Digital Magic Company does all of the post-production and special effects for **BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER**," said the company's Senior Vice President, Jeff Beaulieu.

"We started back in 1990 as an offshoot of another facility. We grew into a major special-effects house, and in 1994 we were bought out by Four Media Company, which is now our parent company. With Four Media's help DM got new equipment and a professional staff of artists, which enabled us to move forward very quickly.

"Not that we were idle prior to 1994, far from it. Between 1990 and 1994 Digital Magic did major visual effects for shows like **VOYAGER**, **DEEP SPACE 9**, and for feature films, and commercials."

Noted visual effects producer Loni Perestire, "We were used to doing effects-heavy shows and were surprised when, in 1997, we were approached by **BUFFY** producers

Jeremy Roberts as the demon Kakistos gets staked by the new Slayer in Sunnydale at the conclusion of second season's "Faith, Hope and Trick."



Joss Whedon and David Greenwalt. With Joss and David, the story was the thing; effects were used very sparingly.

"The reason they came to us was that the few effects that **BUFFY** had were done by another company, and although the effects were quite good, David and Joss were not pleased with them. They said they looked too mechanized. Joss and David were looking for effects that were, as they put it, more 'organic.'

"As an example, take a first-season sequence in which **BUFFY** staked a vampire. You saw the vampire standing, you saw the vampire falling—it was almost like a drop of water falling into a pool of oil—and you saw a splash, and then a metallic-looking 'Poof.' We took the scene of Buffy staking the vampire, and gave the explosion a softer, more realistic look. We showed this to Joss and David, and they just loved it."

"But that wasn't all there was to it," said Beaulieu. "Many times a producer will come to us and say, 'I want this effect.' Nine times out of ten, if we deliver just what they ask for and no more, they are not happy with it. We do listen to what they want, and give it to them, but at the same time we go the extra mile. In the case of **BUFFY**, Joss and David said they needed something more natural-looking. This we did give them: the dust looked like dust even though it was computer-generated. This wasn't enough for us, though. We told ourselves, 'Okay, the flesh and bone have disintegrated, but suppose we add something else. Suppose we have the vampire's teeth remain solid.' You can't really see this in real time, but if you look at a shot of the decomposing vampire frame by frame you can see that the teeth still stay in the air after the body has dissolved, and then fall rapidly to the ground. We showed this to Joss and David and they said, 'Hey, that's okay.' They really appreciated it.

"One of the most challenging effects we had to do," added Perestire, "was what was called the 'Rage Monster' in episode four of the third season, "Beauty and the Beast."

"That show called for a creature, driven by anger, an anger that would actually cause





physical change. What Joss was looking for in an effect was something akin to the creatures Tim Robbins was haunted by in the film *JACOB'S LADDER*, creatures whose heads shift at an unnatural rate. We at Digital Magic spent an entire day and night musing over how to achieve this direct and disturbing visual. We finally hit upon a method. Since the effect in *JACOB'S LADDER* was basically a speed-up, we decided to stabilize the body and shoulders of the actor playing the Rage Monster, John Patrick White, at normal speed, while rendering the head at an inhumanly fast rate.

"White was shot against the production back plate in both normal and made-up modes. The two bodies gave us the stable shoulders and torso as well as the ins and outs of the effect in full motion. He was then removed for a composite clean plate.

"For the head elements, White was brought back and was shot on green screen, again in and out of makeup. He was filmed at normal speed, moving in an exaggerated manner, then at high speed, with contorted facial expressions.

"Later on, we lined up all the production elements, re-timed the various head speeds, the ins and outs, then speeded up, blurred, and warped the footage to create the surreal rage-induced transformation.

"This marriage of ideas and elements worked out extremely well. There was an enormous amount of positive feedback from audiences nationwide, and also from Joss."

"Here at Digital Magic we get a *BUFFY* script about two weeks before it's produced. We then go over to the studio where the episode is being shot—they're right across the street from us—and we supervise all the visual effects. Then we bring them back here and perform them electronically."

"A lot of good, hard technical work goes into making something look natural," laughed Perestire. "Let's take the blasting of the vampires. We do that via a combination of CG, our composite bay, and a multi-layered effect in our Harry. A Harry is a 2-D compositing artist's device that allows an artist to take elements, composite them, change them, tweak them, add to them, enhance, dehance, and manipulate them any way he or she wants to.

"Our methods are new, but the basic concepts we use harken back to the days of Tod Browning, Ken Russell, William Tut-

“Good, hard technical work goes into making something look natural. Our methods are new, but [we] harken back to men who conceived effects organically.”

—Loni Perestire, Efx Supervisor—

tle, men who conceived their special effects, for want of a better word, organically. When we first spoke to Joss and David we wanted to be able to give them something these legendary artists were able to accomplish.

"When we turn the vampires to dust, we are actualizing thought processes, we are being the Brownings, and the Russells, and the Tuttlés. We imagine,

"If we were to think somebody into dust, what would it look like?"

Added Beaulieu, "That's the way we do it here. We already knew what a transformation from a human being to a vampire would be. That was an area that Joss and David were satisfied with. That effect is basically a combination of a morph and a warp. We take a practical person, a baseline, which is, let's say, the Angel human character, and then Angel the vampire. We split those two images to become one. Sometimes the transformation is a static change, at other times there's movement involved. It sounds like a contradiction, but if you have a motion in the neck, or the body, the motions can actually make the transformation look better: we use what's there, what's given, like natural movement or lighting. So, if Angel is looking up at the stars, and he starts looking down at the ground, as he's looking up at the stars, within the motion, when the actual morph occurs, it appears more natural to the human eye. We try to use what's on the set, what's there in the light, to enhance the visual effects and then to create the effect within the person." □

John Patrick White transforms into the Rage Monster in third season's "Beauty and the Beasts." CGI effects supervision is by Loni Perestire.



Nancy Lenahan as Buffy's Mom's best friend gets zombified (t) in third season's "Dead Man's Party." Middle: Buffy slays a vampire in second season's "Surprise." Bottom: Cordelia and Xander make a zombie sandwich in "Dead Man's Party." CGI effects created by Digital Magic's Chris Jones.

"Some thing ripped this swimmer open and ate his insides?"

—Buffy

"Like an Oreo cookie. Well, except for, you know, the chocolatey cookie goodness."

—Willow

GO FISH

★★★★

5-5-98. Written by David Fury and Elin Hampton. Directed by David Semel. Creatures designed by Optic Nerve.

Sunnydale's swim team isn't the greatest, so kindly coach Marin (Charles Cyphers) infuses his lads with fish DNA to turn them into champions. The DNA has an idiosyncratic side effect, as it causes fish-like creatures to germinate inside the boys' bodies. The creatures eat away at the inner organs until they burst through the flesh. Marin hides his "team" in a sewer located under the gymnasium floor, but he is eventually discovered by Buffy and Xander.

An improbable plot, last-minute rescues, a Jabba-the-Hutt villain, slimy, CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON monsters everywhere—a total hoot.



Buffy and Angel kiss as he is absorbed by the statue of the demon in "Becoming, Part II," fulfilling his plan to open the gates of Hell.

"Now, tell me when it hurts."

—Angel, prior to his torturing Giles

BECOMING, PART II

★★★

5-19-98. Written and directed by Joss Whedon.

Angel tortures Giles in order to find the secret of the stone demon, but the soft-spoken Watcher proves braver and more resistant than Angel had anticipated. Drusilla tries a "vampire mind meld" and her method works. Giles revealed it is Angel's blood that is the key to opening and closing the doors of Hell. Buffy is nearly arrested for allegedly causing the death of Kendra. Principal Snyder, who has never liked Buffy, expels the girl from school. Joyce, discovering that her daughter is The Slayer, angrily disowns her. The beleaguered Buffy bursts in on bloodied Angel as he pulls the sword from the stone demon's heart. At the same time, Willow, using Ms. Calendar's spell, returns Angel to his former "good" self. Buffy is overjoyed to see Angel this way, but in order to save humanity, she stabs him. Angel is sucked right down into Hell.

Whedon is an expert at weaving the everyday with the extraordinary. Yes, Buffy is The Slayer, but she is also a very normal teenage girl with normal teenage frustrations and desires. After Joyce has berated Buffy for not revealing that she is The Slayer, the girl tearfully tells her mother that she longs to be free of her duty as The Destroyer of Evil. The interaction between Sutherland and Gellar has solidified to such a point that it is hard to believe that they are not mother and daughter.

"I don't want any more trouble. I just want to be alone and quiet in a room with a chair, and a fireplace, and a tea cozy. I don't even know what a tea cozy is, but I want one."

—Buffy

ANNE

★★

9-29-98. Written and directed by Joss Whedon.

Buffy, using the pseudonym "Anne," has taken a job as a waitress in a sleazy coffee shop in a

Buffy embraces mom (Kristine Sutherland), returning home to Sunnydale in third season opener "Anne" after growing up in the big city.



sleazy city (closely resembling downtown L. A.). She gets involved with Lily (Julia Lee) a homeless girl who was once a member of the Sunset Club, a group of deluded young people who yearned to become vampires (second season, Episode 7, "Lie To Me.") This time Lily has attached herself to a seemingly kindly man named Ken (Carlos Jacott) who is in reality a demon out to make mindless slaves of all the homeless people. In trying to save Lily, Buffy gets (literally) sucked down into the demon's pit. Buffy, her identity established once again, returns home to Joyce.

This season opener has some nice jolts—Ken peeling his handsome face away to reveal the demonic one underneath, the march of the zombies, the final (and brutally violent) fight between the demons and Buffy. What is missing is Joss Whedon's usual concern for social issues. In the episodes "Nightmares" and "Ted," Whedon touched on the horrors of child abuse and domestic violence, respectively. Since "Anne" is a show dealing with Street Life, one expects more of a diatribe on the plight of the homeless.



Joyce, Buffy's mom, beats up one of the invading zombies in "Dead Man's Party," welcoming Buffy back home to Sunnydale in Slayer tradition.

"Buffy, just talking about your problems isn't helping. We might as well try some violence."

—Willow

DEAD MAN'S PARTY

★★★

10-6-98. Written by Marti Noxon. Directed by James Whitmore, Jr.

Buffy's arrival back at Sunnydale is complicated by some rather disturbing confrontations. Principal Snyder refuses to allow her back into school, at which point Joyce tells the spiteful little man that she will take Buffy's case up with the school board. Willow, much to Buffy's disbelief, informs her friend that in Buffy's absence she has been secretly studying witchcraft. Joyce hangs a Nigerian mask up in her living room, unaware that the trinket has the power to bring the dead back to life. During a welcome-home party for Buffy, zombies crash in through the windows and start mauling and murdering.

Confrontations abound in this segment. During the party sequence, Buffy is harangued by just about everyone, including the normally apathetic Cordelia, and the usually sympathetic Willow. Gellar does a superb job when she breaks under the weight of the onslaught.

"You just gotta stand up and salute Sunnydale's death rate. I ran a statistical analysis, and hello, darkness!"

—Mr. Trick, the new vampire in town.

FAITH, HOPE, AND TRICK

★★

10-13-98. Written by David Greenwalt. Directed by James A. Contner. Music by Third Eye Blind.

Buffy is still upset over the demise of Angel, but accepts a date with Scott Hope (Fab Filippo), a young man who has long admired her. When Scott



Fellow Slayer Kendra (Bianca Lawson) returns and offers to share her stake, which she has named "Mr. Pointy," in "Becoming, Part I."

"In case the spell does not succeed, take my lucky stake. I've killed many vampires with it. I call it 'Mr. Pointy.'"

—Kendra

"You named your stake?"

—Buffy

BECOMING, PART I

★★★

5-12-98. Written and directed by Joss Whedon.

In order to send all humankind to Hell so that the dark forces may rule the Earth, Angel, Drusilla, and Spike acquire a statue of a demon with a sword imbedded in its heart. The act of pulling out the sword will open the mouth of Hell, but Angel discovers he is unable to extricate the sword without help from a person well-versed in the demonic arts. That person is, of course, Giles. Buffy has made a discovery of her own. She and Willow find Ms. Calendar's spell-reversing floppy from "Prison." Assisted by Giles and Kendra (who has returned to Sunnydale "sensing dark powers at work"), Willow and Buffy begin to struggle over the spell.

"I really liked acting in 'Becoming,'" declared Boreanaz. "The episode was cool because we really dived into Angel's past, putting those wigs on, and going back in time. For an actor, that's just great." Boreanaz's speaking of "going back in time" refers to the frequent flashbacks relating how Angel became a vampire, and how, with the aid of a likeable, Runyonesque demon named Whistler (Max Perlich) Angel first happened to discover Buffy. Boreanaz tries different accents, including an Irish brogue, which don't quite come off, but it's obvious he has worked hard at the dialects, and is giving them all he's got. Incidentally, the flashbacks themselves are seductively photographed and beautifully costumed.

Buffy

JULIET LANDAU

Martin Landau's daughter on playing Drusilla, the series' semi-regular vampire femme fatale.

By Mitch Persons

It's not easy to compete with an articulate, latex dinosaur who's sidekick is Whoopi Goldberg, but Juliet Landau effortlessly stole the limelight in *THEODORE REX* (1996). Granted, the \$33 million cheesy comedy circumvented theatrical release and did a prat-fall directly into video bins. But tolerant viewers were rewarded with Landau as Dr. Shade, whose impersonation of a humanitarian is right on the money. Bedecked in an Anna Sage-red dress, she cheerfully projects a mean streak of noxiousness. If she had kicked the cuddly dinosaur's butt, you'd look the other way. Or cheer her on.

Eccentric roles seem to be a specialty for the daughter of Oscar-winning actor Martin Landau: "I have been involved in some rather interesting characterizations. When I did *ED WOOD* for Tim Burton, I played Loretta King. She was the actress who played *THE BRIDE OF THE MONSTER*, one of Wood's films. I had to wear this long wedding dress-type gown yet, at the same time, give the impression that I was about to become one of the walking dead!"

Landau hybridized Dr. Shade's menace and Loretta King's "living/dead" schizophrenia into Drusilla, the waif-like vampire that she plays on *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*. Abetted by "love-partner" Spike (James Marsters), the duo make life a living hell for occupants located in the deceptively placid town of Sunnydale.

"The roles of Loretta King and Dr. Shade were a big factor in my being cast as Drusilla," explained Landau. "Joss Whedon, the executive producer of *BUFFY*, had seen my work and asked for a reel to be sent over. Then I went in for a meeting, and I met with Joss and Gail Berman and David Greenwalt, the co-executive producers. We had this really incredibly creative, wonderful meeting where ideas were being bounced back and forth. I had read a little bit about Drusilla beforehand, and already had an idea about



Landau as Drusilla, with James Marsters as Spike, her consort, "the Sid & Nancy of the vampire set" as conceived by series creator Joss Whedon.

how I would like to play her."

The meeting concluded with the birth of one of the TV medium's most vile femmes. "I must give Joss credit for that," insisted Landau. "He had a very specific vision about the show, and apparently had the characters of Spike and Drusilla in his mind for over a decade. Drusilla is a very deep character, and there's a lot of dimension to her—a lot of levels, a lot of color—which is really fun for me to play. In terms of her being so frightening, I have come from the inside of Drusilla. So to me, she's not scary. Whenever you play a character, you sort of pick up the character with tender hands and you love that character.

"But then there is that back story about Angel, [David Boreanaz], who is Buffy's vampire boyfriend. Angel was also a former lover of Drusilla's. He did a complete turnaround and wound up torturing her before turning her into a vampire. That unspeakable experience left the poor girl mentally unhinged. There's always an element that's unpredictable about how Drusilla is going to react to anything. She's nothing like a clear-cut, straightforward woman, and I think that's the part that makes her so frightening. So when I watch myself on the show, I go 'Oh, my God, she is pretty scary!'"

"Even though Drusilla can act so grotesquely, I just love playing her. I'm glad I'm now a semi-regular on the show, because it gives me the time and the opportunity to explore different facets of her character.

"Joss has described Spike and Drusilla as the Sid and Nancy of the vampire set [She laughed]. I really like that analogy. Even their look was a cross between period, Victorian-looking and Kate Moss-cheap. But there's also a sweet, sentimental side to their relationship. That's one of the things that makes them interesting villains. It sort of balances out the evil, horrible deeds that they do. There are moments when Drusilla goes on these bad trips, and Spike saves her from rambling on about daisies dying, or her hair falling out or whatever.

"Their love can get a little off-beat, too. It really showed up in the episode where Drusilla regains her vampire strength by draining it out of Angel. There was this dynamic with Angel, Spike and Drusilla where things got just slightly kinky. Here was Angel tied to a pole, his hand pierced by a stake, and Drusilla's hungrily lapping up his blood while Spike looks on. It was perhaps the most powerful and frightening scene that I was involved in. Yet, at the same time, and in its own bizarre way, it showed the closeness that these three vampires have." □

Buffy

BIANCA LAWSON

The teenage actress on playing second season's killer guest-star Slayer with a Caribbean accent.

By Mitch Persons

There isn't any vampire in this world who would not stake his or her reputation on the fact that Buffy Summers, the heroine of the TV series *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*, is a formidable adversary, both physically and verbally. However, the visually appealing Ms. Summers, as portrayed by Sarah Michelle Gellar, faced a fair amount of competition herself in two episodes entitled "What's My Line?, Parts I and II." The competition came in the form of an exotic, graceful-as-a-panther rival Slayer named Kendra, who was able to match Buffy karate blow for karate blow. Kendra even managed to somewhat outshine Buffy in one-liners—all of Kendra's quips were delivered in a disarmingly seductive Caribbean accent.

In talking to 18-year-old Bianca Lawson, who took on the role of Kendra, there is no small feeling of wonderment to discover that she, like Buffy regular Juliet Landau, has absolutely no trace of the accent she affected so convincingly.

"I was born and raised in L.A.," said Lawson. "Born and raised my whole life. It's such a funny thing, because Kendra's accent was such an issue. When I went in to read for the part, I did it in my own sort of voice, and then they called me and asked, 'Can you come in tomorrow with an accent?' I go, 'What?' And so I didn't really know what they wanted, and then they decided they wanted Jamaican; they wanted Kendra to be a well-educated Jamaican, because the thing about it is, the upper class has a very British base to it, but because there are other people on the show, James Marsters, Juliet Landau, and Anthony Stewart Head, with British accents, they wanted me to do the patois. But then once I did the patois, some people decided it was too



Slayers back-to-back: Lawson with Sarah Michelle Gellar, playing Kendra in three second season shows, "What's My Line I & II" and "Becoming."

heavy and sometimes it couldn't be understood. It was like constantly trying to make it not as heavy, so maybe cheating a little bit and having to change some of the words. Actually, I would have liked to have the accent heavier, and there was a little bit of a conflict there, but they were the ones in charge, so I gave them what they wanted."

Although young, Lawson is something of a veteran when it comes to professional conflicts like the one she had to face in *BUFFY*. "I was a regular on *SAVED BY THE BELL: THE NEW CLASS* when I was 14. It was my first all-consuming job. Everybody on the show was about the same age, and everybody was hitting that teenaged thing at the same time—dealing with things that come with being a teenager and then knowing that you are a celebrity at

such a young age. Then, when you have a whole bunch of kids, it's like you deal with the ups and downs. I was really intensely at school, and it wasn't a situation where the show really helped me do my schoolwork, and my school really didn't want me to work, so it was kind of an ongoing battle. During that time period I wasn't incredibly happy, but that wasn't totally to do with the show. It was more or less the conflict between school and the show, and both demanding my full attention all the time."

Lawson felt no such disharmony in working with her on-screen rival, Sarah Michelle Gellar. "Sarah is a true professional. I really admire her. She invests so much of herself in *Buffy*, and if she feels she has to extend herself for quality, she will do it. I don't know if that was a good thing or a bad thing for her, but I thought it was pretty commendable.

"She also happens to be a genuinely nice person. She always treated me as if I was royalty.

Here she was involved with this really busy schedule—she had just completed two movies, *I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER*, and *SCREAM 2*, and then she had the series. That much work might turn anyone else into a raving lunatic, but not Sarah."

Lawson has hardly been inactive herself. "I've done some episodic TV since *Buffy*. I did the film *PRIMARY COLORS* with John Travolta, Emma Thompson and Kathy Bates. Now I'm involved in a theatrical production. That's the thing about this business. You can be really busy for a big chunk of time, like I am now, and then all of a sudden you're just kind of floating. And then like a week later you'll be really busy again. It's frustrating at times, but you know what? It's kind of nice to have things a little bit unpredictable." □

Buffy

ALYSON HANNIGAN

The brains behind the Slayer on playing Buffy's nerdy sidekick.

By Mitch Persons

They don't call her Buffy for nothing. Her exercise regime includes vampire exterminations (tough workout,) practicing martial arts and purging her home turf of nuisances like an overgrown praying mantis and insurance salesmen. But sometimes she leans on modern technology to smoke out these critters, so Buffy inevitably bonds with a shy computer nerd.

Willow the computer nerd is portrayed by the very extroverted Alyson Hannigan, a loquacious youth with large, doe eyes and an impish smile. She has always had an inclination to perform. "I come from Washington, D.C." she said, flashing her pearly whites. "Both my parents were photographers. When I was a baby, whenever they needed an infant in a shot, they would use me. I really believe that my fondness for acting stemmed from those experiences because—even as a toddler—I loved being in front of a camera.

"When I was four years old, my mom and I moved to Atlanta, Georgia, and she would do magazine jobs, print jobs, stuff like that, most of the time using me as a model. A commercial agent there saw some of my pictures, signed me and got me some TV commercials. When I was about 11, I was visiting my dad here in California one Christmas vacation. He took me around to some California agents and they said to me, 'Yeah, we would definitely sign you up if you lived here.' I told my mom when I got back to Georgia, and she said, 'Okay, let's move!' And we did. I've been working ever since.

"My first picture was MY STEPMOTHER IS AN ALIEN, with Dan Aykroyd and Kim Basinger. An interesting thing is that Seth Green, who plays Oz, Willow's



Hannigan, the opposite of her TV persona, a pert and pretty extrovert who has always sought the showbusiness limelight.

boyfriend, also played my boyfriend in that film. After MY STEPMOTHER... I did a short-lived sitcom called FREE SPIRIT [1989-90]. It was sort of a BEWITCHED-kind of show. It went for 13 episodes, then got cancelled. I did some guest spots here and there, nothing really too wonderful—movies of the week and all that stuff. But nothing great until BUFFY.

"I almost didn't get the part of Willow. My agent had submitted me, but, for some reason, they wouldn't see me. They had cast



Faith (Eliza Dushku), Buffy's rival Slayer from England, faces Sunnydale's vampire contingent in third season's "Faith, Hope and Tricks."

presents Buffy with a claddagh ring, Buffy recoils, as it reminds her of one that Angel had given her. Joyce has spoken to the school board and, over Principal Snyder's objections, has gotten her daughter reinstated at Sunnydale High. That evening, a suave vampire, Mr. Trick (K. Todd Freeman,) arrives in Sunnydale in a limo, vowing to be "the town's main man." At the same time, Buffy runs into a cryptic young woman named Faith (Eliza Dushku,) who turns out to be a Slayer. The two girls join forces in eliminating a vampire known as Kakistos (Jeremy Roberts) who has followed Faith from her base in England to Sunnydale. Buffy returns to the site where Angel was killed and drops off his claddagh ring. After the unhappy girl leaves, a nude Angel drops from the ceiling onto the floor where he lies moaning in agony.

This episode appears to be set up mainly to introduce Mr. Trick and Faith (who, no doubt will become series semi-regulars,) and to re-introduce Angel. Mr. Trick is delightfully wicked, but Faith, with her semi-hip slang (she calls vampires "vamps," and Buffy, "B,") and totally obnoxious attitude, is nothing more than a pain in the rear.

"Every guy, from mammal down to 'I loved THE ENGLISH PATIENT,' has beast in him."
—Faith

BEAUTY AND THE BEASTS ★★★★★

10-20-98. Written by Marti Noxon. Directed by James Whitmore, Jr.

A wild, dog-like creature has been killing Sunnydale men. Because the victims have been literally torn to pieces, Buffy and her gang believe that werewolf Oz is the murderer. On her nightly patrol, Buffy runs right into Angel (now clad in tight-fitting jeans) who appears animalistic and has no memory at all of her. Buffy chains Angel up, but the following day he manages to break free.

Buffy puts Angel in Chains in "Beauty and the Beasts," when her missing vampire lover loses his memory and turns uncontrollably animalistic.





Hannigan and Gellar. Willow was the last of the ensemble to be cast, with Hannigan winning the part after filming began.

“Willow’s belief in supernatural forces was difficult for me to get used to. I subscribe to the ‘Prove it, and I’ll believe it’ theory.”

—Alyson Hannigan, Willow—

someone else for the presentation, but then she got fired when the show was picked up. I finally was able to get an audition for the recast...and I auditioned for what seemed like forever. Then I waited and waited, but didn’t hear anything. I’m not the most patient person. After a while, I was at the point of, ‘Oh please, just tell me yes or no, because I will kill myself if I don’t find out!’ I figured, even if it was bad news, at least I would know. Well, I was at a 7-Eleven store one day when I got a page to call the producers. After all that auditioning and waiting, they told me I had gotten the part! I was like, ‘All right, cool!’

“On the first day of shooting, I was a little bit nervous. Nick [Brendon], Charisma [Carpenter], and Sarah [Michelle Gellar] had all known each other from the pilot episode, and I was pretty much a stranger. But it didn’t take very long for all of them to become very good friends of mine. I mean, everyone involved with the show is so great and so nice. I really consider them my family. I see Nick and Sarah all the time. During the first season’s hiatus, I had my tonsils taken out, and Sarah visited me in the hospital and brought me a little Beanie Baby. That was so sweet of her—and so typical.

“Then there’s Charisma. She is so funny! As Cordelia Chase, she always seems to get the show’s best lines. During the first season, she was always insulting Willow, and then, before she became romantically involved with him, she turned her verbal venom on Xander. It’s so weird because Cordelia is such a bitch and Charisma, in real life, is just the opposite. She is an extremely nice person.

“Anthony Stewart Head, who plays

Giles, is another nice person. I really love him, he’s just the sweetest man. He’s smart and he’s wonderful, and has a heart of gold.

“Tony really throws himself into his work—literally. There was one scene he was doing, where he was supposed to have been fighting or something and had been dragged across the floor; so he went outside, jumped into a pile of dirt and rolled around in it to get the ‘dirty character feel.’ He came back in and I—oblivious to what he had

been doing—said, ‘Oh Tony, you have some dirt on you,’ and I was wiping it off and he goes, “No, no, no! I was just rolling around in the dirt for 15 minutes, trying to get this filthy.’ I guess you would call that Method acting, but it’s something I just don’t, or ever will, understand.”

Hannigan attributed the credibility of the show’s characters, and their relationships, to executive producer, Joss Whedon. “He’s always there for us. There have been times when one of us has said, ‘I really sucked in that last scene. I just couldn’t get with it,’ and Joss has dropped whatever he’s been doing to offer his support and steer us in the right direction. I honestly don’t know what I would do if he weren’t around. He could have such an attitude—and that would be okay—but he’s really smart. He could be such a jerk, but he’s not.

“I have never respected anyone more than Joss. He’s just brilliant. I would love to get inside his brain for an hour and look around. He has idea after idea after idea. And his ideas are so great. It’s true that we have a terrific set of writers on the show, but there’s a Joss Whedon touch behind every plot twist, and behind every occult force that Buffy and the gang face.

“Willow’s belief in these supernatural forces was one of the most difficult things for me to get used to. I subscribe to the ‘Prove it, and I’ll believe it’ theory. I’m not going to say, ‘No, vampires don’t exist,’ but then, who am I to say what exists and what doesn’t? I think I would really like to take somebody’s word for it, like if they had pictures or something. I don’t think, though, that I would need a demonstration of a vampire—especially right in front of me.” □

It is discovered that a student named Pete (John Patrick White) becomes a “Rage Monster” when his jealousy over his girlfriend Debbie (Danielle Weeks) is aroused. One of Pete’s targets is Oz, a friend of Debbie’s. He confronts Oz just as the tortured boy turns into the werewolf. The two monsters fight, but Buffy and Faith intervene and chase the Rage Monster off. Buffy follows him to a storeroom, where he attacks her. The Rage Monster is just too strong for her, though, and he quickly gets the upper hand. Just when it looks like it’s all over, vampire Angel bursts in and kills the creature. Reverting back to his “human” self, Angel recognizes Buffy, and falls to his knees in front of her.

Grab-bag, anyone? It is truly astonishing how writer Marti Noxon can cram transformations, monster fights, stark drama, and the usual light moments into one hour, and still have everything work so well. The conclusion of the episode is especially poignant.

One glaring inconsistency: Oz’s cheesy-looking werewolf suit and makeup are definitely not the same as they were in “Phases” (second season, Episode 15.) Gone are the snout, the fangs, and the more realistic-looking fur. Budgetary restrictions, no doubt.

“Just because you were Guacamole Queen when you were three, Buff, doesn’t mean you understand how being elected Homecoming Queen works.”

—Cordelia

HOMECOMING

★★

11-3-98. Written and directed by David Greenwalt. Vocals by Lori Carson

While Buffy and Cordelia compete for the title of Homecoming Queen, Mr. Trick assembles a motley crew of vampires and Slayer hunters to eliminate Buffy and Faith. The posse, which consists of two cowboy vampires, a couple of German hit men, and a Lex Luthor-like computer genius, fails miserably, but Trick is summoned by the mayor of Sunnydale, Richard Wilkins (Harry Groener,) to City Hall. Wilkins, a slimeball as well as a clean freak, congratulates Trick on his attempt. He suggests that he and the urbane vampire join forces to eliminate the “rebellious element” (spelled Buffy Summers) from the town.

With the exception of Wilkins, there is nothing radically new here. There’s a charming scene between Willow and Xander, where, bedecked in formal attire for the Homecoming, they do an impromptu waltz and then share their first on-screen kiss. Hannigan’s character of Willow, like Nicholas Brendon’s Xander, has matured and become more complex. When Willow was seen in the first season, she was an insecure computer nerd, bending to Cordelia’s will, and secretly harboring her love for Xander. In this, third season, Willow has developed a stronger backbone, and in her own quiet, intense way, become something of a seductress. It’s only fair to mention that Charisma Carpenter, in her slinky green gown, has the finest full body profile seen on television since 1949.

Willow and Xander dance together in “Homecoming,” marking Alyson Hannigan’s third season maturation to quiet seductress.



Buffy

VAMPIRE MAKEUP

Optic Nerve on streamlining the process to meet TV deadlines.

By Mitch Persons

"We have it down almost by rote now," said Optic Nerve's John Vulich about devising the vampire makeups on *BUFFY*. Vulich works with makeup artist Todd McIntosh, who takes a head cast of the actors. "From that we generate the molds, then we sculpt on a forehead," said Vulich. "When that's done, we take a mold of that, and make the pieces, and ship them on to the set.

"Often," added McIntosh, "we get our scripts at the last minute, although Optic Nerve usually gets a little more warning than I do. I generally get the appliances I have to work with on the morning that work begins. I wake up at three in the morning to be on set by whatever time. The appliances from Optic Nerve are usually sitting in a box on my front step, so I just grab them on my way out. That's the real challenge of doing prosthetics for television. There's never really enough time to work things through. You just sort of do it.

Noted Vulich, "When we first started doing the show, every person who played a vampire got a specific forehead built for them even if they were background players. I told the producers that after a while we're going to develop enough of a variety that we're not going to need to do that any more. So we've gotten to the point now where there are probably 12 to 15 different vampire foreheads, and there's definitely a size that will fit everybody."

"It's developed into a little bit of a joke," said McIntosh, "because every time that a vampire got killed off, their face went into our 'generic pile.' In the second season of *BUFFY*, when the script called for a gaggle of vampires, all we had to do was use those generic faces. It saved a lot of time. I can now get a person in and out of one of those masks within 45 minutes, whereas it used to take an hour and a half, two hours to do.

"We do pride ourselves in our efficiency. I was most annoyed

when Sarah [Michelle Gellar] went off to do *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE*, and came back and told me they put the vampire faces on for their skit in three minutes. I guess they were used to quick changes, and they had their method of getting that forehead down in lightning-fast time. To give them their credit, though, it looked awfully nice."

"It's too bad we can't apply that secret to doing the special jobs, like Spike [James Marsters] and Drusilla [Juliet Landau,]" sighed Vulich. "Both these people have prosthetics built specifically for their faces. In Drusilla's case, there was actually a request made to make her look sleeker and sexier than vampires usually look. We designed the makeup in such a way that it accentuated the very exotic features that she already had. But I don't think there's any way anybody could do that in three minutes.

"As Todd has said, though, we have managed to speed things up from the first season to the third. We've been able to do that by performing little tricks. Like the vampire foreheads, we have a lot of materials around that we can recycle. There are bits of creatures that we've done for other shows, for instance, *BABYLON 5*, like the back of a head, or ears, that we can use over again and just do a new face. Out of respect to the producers of *BUFFY*, we would never use anything that was very recognizable, at least not without their consent. But we

McIntosh (left) and Dayne Johnson (rear) in the makeup trailer at the WB, preparing a cadre of vampire opponents to go up against Sunnydale's Slayer.



An exquisite job on a vampire extra about to get his butt kicked by Buffy, prosthetics by Optic Nerve, application on set supervised by Todd McIntosh.

can always use things like hands or arms, or a chest, and just do a different paint job, or add some extra pieces to it."

"The real challenges," picked up McIntosh, "are the smaller pieces, the jigsaw-type pieces that go on that I have to put into place and color more delicately to look real. The challenge of painting an appliance to look like real skin, for example, an aging makeup, is far more complicated than doing any kind of monster or blood work. You can always cover a bad edge with blood, you can always paint something green with mottle, and everybody accepts it, because it's a monster. But when people are looking at an aging makeup, they want to see it

looking like it's real. I credit my beauty makeup experience for that, because the more you understand how to make skin look beautiful, the more you understand how to use colors to paint something that looks like skin. No one is a solid base coat. No one's just one color. There's a whole myriad of blues and pinks and yellows, and sometimes even oranges, that lay together on the skin to give the effect of reality and translucency. You learn how to be very soft and subtle with your blending, how to make your work clean, not muddy." □

TOTAL RECALL

Showtime's new sci-fi series
does justice to Philip K. Dick.

By Paul Wardle

The first incarnation of TOTAL RECALL was the financially successful cinematic version of 1990. Loosely based on a novel and a short story by maverick science-fiction novelist Philip K. Dick, the film was praised for its special effects and art direction, but like many

a big-budget blockbuster from that period, it was like a beautifully wrapped package with nothing inside. The miscasting of Arnold Schwarzenegger as the protagonist, and the sublimation of the finer points of the original story in favor of action sequences where Arnold could shoot, blow-up and maim humans and martians alike, reduced the story to super-hero

level. Dick's story, "I Can Remember it for You Wholesale" was not well-served by the treatment, and that's something that the makers of this new TV series from Showtime, hope to correct. The series premieres March 14, starring Michael Easton, Karl Pruner, Michael Rawlins, Cynthia Preston and Judith Krant.

The focus of creator Art Monterastelli is of a more philosophical and intellectual kind of science-fiction, and no Schwarzenegger clones will be present. Philip K. Dick's protagonist was more of an everyman, with average strength and abilities, and to demonstrate the difference between the lead character in this version and the character of Quaid in the original, Monterastelli has named him David Hume; an obvious reference to the great Scottish philosopher.

Hume is also short for humanist, according to Monterastelli, and the futuristic world of 2070 that acts as the setting for the show, is sorely lacking in humanistic advocates. "The future has been dehumanized; technology's taken over," said Monterastelli of the world in which TOTAL RECALL is set, "and we find out that, in many ways [the Hume character] is one of the last traditional humanists. Although



Future Cops: Michael Eastman as Hume and Karl Pruner (r) as partner Favre.

Pruner as Favre, an android virtually indistinguishable from human kind, in the Recall chair, an approach closer to Dick's celebrated 1982 BLADE RUNNER.



not a philosopher, he has certain values that were once the strongest values of western culture in the late 17th and 18th century that have actually been under attack in this century because of the barbarism of this century."

Monterastelli added that the real-life Hume's book *Inquiry Into Human Understanding* was an inspiration for this viewpoint. "It was also done to clearly separate this piece from the movie version. I wanted it to be clear that not only is David Hume different from Douglas Quaid, but they are actually polar opposites in some ways. Hume is a character who uses his instincts and his compassion in a way, to get to the bottom of what's happening instead of his fists and machine guns, although he can be a man of action at times."



Dick's story "I Can Remember It For You Wholesale," serves cable as the basis for a futuristic buddy cop show unlike the 1990 Arnold Schwarzenegger movie.

In contrasting his character, Hume and Schwarzenegger's Quaid, series star Michael Easton joked, "He was a lot bigger than I am." He then elaborated, "I think probably the biggest difference is that I think this has more to do with the Philip Dick short story "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?"

Easton characterized the original movie as having "more brawn, in terms of the size and the budget, the explosions, I think this is more cerebral. I don't want to say it's more intelligent, because that just sounds so pretentious. I think the problems that are solved on this are done more in a technical, analytical way. Not that we don't have action, but I think the most attractive element about the original movie was the element of paranoia. The reference point [from which this

series takes inspiration] is much stronger to BLADERUNNER."

The aforementioned Philip K. Dick story was the basis of BLADERUNNER, while the movie TOTAL RECALL had more to do with Dick's story *I Can Remember It For You Wholesale*. "I think that's an underlying theme in all of Philip Dick's work," continued Easton. "There's the proponents of technology and advancement and then there's the fear of too much technology and what comes from that."

The director of the pilot, as well as other episodes of the series, is Mario Azzopardi, recently profiled in *Cinefantastique's* September issue for his work on the current OUTER LIMITS and STARGATE TV shows. Azzopardi is justly proud of his association with OUTER LIMITS, though a change in the hi-

ART MONTERASTELLI, CREATOR

"What we've done is go back to the sensibility of Philip K. Dick—the world of the future not always being a good thing, and a paranoid world too. Things aren't what they seem."

erarchy caused him to leave the show due to artistic differences. He responded to the often talked-about BLADERUNNER connection by saying, "I don't think that we are, in any way, shape or form, afraid to say that we have borrowed from BLADERUNNER."

Monterastelli chimed in that Philip K. Dick also wrote the story "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?", which was the basis for BLADERUNNER. "What we've done," says Monterastelli, "is to go back to the sensibility of Philip K. Dick... which was much more of a psychological thriller; the world of the future not always being a good thing, [and] a paranoid world too. Things aren't always what they seem to be."

But as director Azzopardi is quick to add, "It would be very arrogant of me to say that we tried to emulate the look of BLADERUNNER. We're talking about a \$40 million picture as opposed to a \$4 million TV show! You have to decide what your limitations are and our limitations are very severe." He credits the collaborative efforts of art director Peter Cosco, the lighting people and set designers for being able to achieve the look of a big budget film without the cost.

The confidence that Showtime in the U.S. and Alliance in Canada and abroad, have shown in their efforts is amazing. Deciding to go ahead with 22 episodes before the audience even had a chance to see and react to the pilot, is rarely rare in big budget television. "They had the title rights to TOTAL RECALL," explained Monterastelli, "for several years, but they had never been pitched an idea that made sense to the president of Showtime. Since he's had so much success with science fiction, he was looking for that next step; a science-fiction show that could also be a kind

of quality cop show/quality drama like NYPD BLUE. He's been looking for that for a while, and it was just timing. I pitched a certain take which was very different from the movie, which he just sparked to. One of the partners in this, Polygram, had a 22-episode commitment and just rolled this idea into that commitment."

A detailed, two-hour pitch to the network was followed up with a 40-page script outline and the deal was finalized. The same sort of thing occurred when Mario Azzopardi directed the pilot for STARGATE, knowing that 22 shows were already given the green light.

To attempt to contrast his style of directing from that of the theatrical release by Paul Verhoeven, Azzopardi said, "First of all, the style has to be adapted to your material. Rather than a science-fiction where the technology is paramount in a movie with the camera radiating out of the technology that's being used, so that we see the

Like Dick's Dekard, Cynthia Preston is Easton's wife, distrustful of his new android partner on the force.



ROBOCOP

Karl Pruner on playing a futuristic android dick.

By Paul Wardle

One of the key players in the new *TOTAL RECALL* cable series is Karl Pruner, here in Toronto to film 22 episodes on the Downsview Military Base in the north end of Toronto. It is the same base used to film the television version of *UNIVERSAL SOLDIER* last year, and well-suited to complex productions like this one.

Pruner is Canadian, born in Kingston, Ontario and as an army brat, was relocated several times when his father was transferred. From there, Pruner then moved to Edmonton, Alberta. Then, it was Germany, Quebec, Maryland and finally back to Kingston for high school, after which Pruner was ready to settle down in one place. "I'd had enough!" he exclaimed.

He is tall and broad-shouldered, with close-cropped dark hair and a clear, soft-spoken verbal delivery. Pruner is quietly intense and extremely intelligent; qualities that he brings to the character Ian Farve, who appears in every episode of the series.

Farve is an android cop, partnered with the very human lead character of David Hume, played by Michael Easton. Hume's last partner was killed and he's none too happy with Farve at first; not even realizing yet that he's dealing with an actual machine; representative of the bane of Hume's existence...technology. Farve himself doesn't know he's not human at first either, but despite his computer-like intelligence, can't seem to come to grips with human behavior and slowly starts to exhibit some of it himself.

Pruner pontificated at length in his dryly humorous way about where the android character fits into the scheme of the show. "Not just any android!" he cautioned. "The prototypical Alpha 1. This is an android, that can pass as a human being. It's part of the plot of the pilot that I am the new partner. It's discovered in the second hour [of the pilot] that I'm an android."

The cool, detached delivery that Pruner effects as Farve may bring back memories of classic *STAR TREK* characters like Spock or Data. Yet Farve is neither an alien/human hybrid like Spock or a freakish looking walking computer like Data. He is much closer to the android patrolman that



Pruner as Farve, *TOTAL RECALL*'s android cop, badly damaged in "Machine Dreams, Part 1." The Canadian actor is trying to put a different spin on robot acting.

was teamed with Ernest Borgnine, under nearly identical circumstances in the television movie *FUTURE COP* (1976) which later became a short-lived network series with Michael Shannon again cast as the android who becomes Borgnine's partner, causing befuddled adjustments in the latter.

The relationship between these new partners, according to Pruner, "was uneasy at first, because I replaced his partner, who died before his eyes. As it's beginning to gel, suddenly this curve ball is thrown at him that I'm an android."

Most of the dangerous stunts are performed by Ken Quinn's team of professional stunt people. "The special effects coordinator, along with the director and the producer will make the call on whether or not they will allow an actor to get involved. If it's something on a low level, like a fight, then everybody uses their judgment. Most often, they'll duplicate the fight with the stuntmen and the actors; then they can pick and choose. Usually the stunt team will

have more violence, and they'll shoot that wide, and put the actors in close-up."

When asked if he'd ever played non-human characters before, Pruner's reply was intriguing. "That's an interesting question," he said. "I don't think of Ian Farve as a non-human character. He is an artificial human. There's a nice line in the Asimov novel, *Caves Of Steel*. There's another robot cop. He says, 'Surely, the distinction is between intelligence and non-intelligence; not between robots and humans.' I think that's the android's point of view. The android is sort of like the adopted child. It can't reckon its parentage. It clearly is human. If you think about the number of factors involved in what a sentient being is all about, we could duplicate a lot of those features, given the technology."

But, he went on to add, though it may be possible to program the being with human emotions, it would not understand them like it understands the scientific aspects of the world. "I like to protect the character of Farve by not making decisions in this area. He is autonomous and his programming feeds back. He learns by doing, and as he learns, he alters his programming. He is a much freer character than many of the robot characters that we're used to. He's freer than Data, for example. Data walks around with this emotion chip which he dare not use because it's a Pandora's Box. Farve has all the emotions. We don't know how human he will be."

"The android is a metaphor for 'What is consciousness?'" Pruner continued. "Through Farve, we get to see, in this post-nuclear future, a kind of an innocence and a discovery. Yeah, he's got a huge amount of knowledge, but he doesn't always know where it comes from. To an android human consciousness is a precious, precious gift; all the more so because it's stumbled upon by an android; not taken for granted through years of training and slow emergence from infancy. An android walks out of the box fully functional. It goes from whatever stream of consciousness a transistor radio is in...to full human consciousness. The world dawns very suddenly for an android and we can imagine the tremendous sense of wonder that this being would have. So I reserve the right to play Farve differently as the show goes along. His emotions are very, very immediate to him and are felt very deeply. But unlike a human being, he doesn't carry them from moment to moment." □

spaceships and the hardware and we enjoy seeing the hardware, this is a bit different. The way to explain it is by relating a story that happened to me when I was a little boy. My great-grandmother took me to the laundry room when I was about six years old and said, 'Look, Mario, your Daddy just gave me this washing machine. It washes clothes by itself!' I said, 'Grandma! It's a washing machine!' For me, it didn't have any impact whatsoever. For my generation, the computer is, and always will be, a fascinating thing. In my house now, we have six computers. It's like the washing machine for my grandmother. For my kids, this is nothing! That's what we're doing with the show. Technology is nothing. They use it, and sometimes they use certain [machines] and we don't even explain it. We don't say what it is. Also the background, the actors, the camera movements, are very natural. There's no accent given to technology."

In an age where so much on television is dumbed down, recapped and explained ad nauseum, this approach is refreshing to say the least. Azzopardi offered an example: "Hume makes a telephone call, he talks to the monitor and a woman's face comes up [on the screen], and as he is talking to her, he takes something from the table and puts it on top of the monitor. What is that? We don't explain it. What he's actually done is take the camera that is seeing him and place it so that the person he's talking to will see him. When he calls for backup from the police, he just presses a button. We don't cut to a close-up of the device and he doesn't say anything."

Sometimes even the creators of the futuristic props don't know what they are supposed to be, concerned only that they look functional. This doesn't happen by mistake; it is merely part of the grand illusion. Modern journalism, including the magazine you hold in your hands, has had an impact on audiences. With the latest special effects constantly being deconstructed in print and their secrets revealed, the media have unwittingly been guilty of demystifying movie magic. Be-

MARIO AZZOPARDI, DIRECTOR

"This is how I approach my work . . . passion, passion, passion, and then some more passion. And don't try to emulate, because when you say 'They did it this way,' you lose!"



The pilot opens with a dream sequence of astronauts on Mars, a *Recall* fantasy in which the dreamers die, bringing in cops Eastman and Pruner to investigate.

cause of this, it is difficult to find something that will create intrigue for the seasoned viewer. The creators of TOTAL RECALL have decided on fakery to accomplish this. In the series, some of the objects found in a typical urban dwelling may serve no purpose, or appear to be something more than they are. With the wonders conveyed by other machines, the viewer is never sure which devices work and which don't, for they are all treated as commonplace by the characters.

"For example," Azzopardi mused, "if somebody from a hundred years ago were to enter a house today, and he's confronted by a TV that is not on, what would he make out of it? How would you explain a TV to that person? To him it is just a glass. Same thing for us. Every now and then, there'll be things [that we don't explain]."

The mixture of old and new as a futuristic design was most successful in Terry Gilliam's BRAZIL, but in this series it is not so much ingrained in modern culture as kept alive by anti-tech dissenters like Hume.

As director Mario Azzopardi and executive producer/creator

Art Monterastelli revealed, many of the appliances and gadgets seen in and around the background of the series are nonfunctional. Others are workable, but their function is not revealed to the viewer. This presents problems of continuity for the actors. Easton explained, "What you've got to constantly remind yourself as you're [playing a scene] is that you see these weird objects they put in front of you like a video phone. You can't make a big deal out of it. That takes some getting used to. You haven't seen it before, and those are little things that we have to keep up with."

Certain plot elements will also be left unsolved, though this is not a carry over from the original TOTAL RECALL, where almost to the end of the film, you were never quite sure whether the danger was real, or the events had actually occurred as Quaid had been led to believe. In this new series, there is no attempt to fool the viewer into thinking that the whole story might be one long dream sequence.

"I don't know where you could go with that," replied

Monterastelli. "You could only do that once. If the whole year was just a dream, going into the second year, you'd lose your audience."

Azzopardi isn't afraid of the comparison to the movie version of TOTAL RECALL or BLADERUNNER, one of the best movies ever made. The only way to circumvent the expected reaction is to "be honest with yourself; understand what your limitations are, then give 1000% within your limitations. This is how I approach my work . . . passion, passion, passion, and then some more passion. And don't try to emulate, because the minute you say, 'they did it this way, so let's do it also this way' . . . you lose!"

Monterastelli and Azzopardi certainly didn't lose when they showed the pilot episode to Showtime. They loved it. The only thing lost now is time. The cable giants loved it so much, they moved up the date of the debut to March. "Oh my God! This is terrible news for us," whined Azzopardi, saying, "We don't have time. It gives a whole new twist on the finishing touches. We work 26 hours a day."

The two men are so busy, in fact, that the preceding interview was conducted in a car on the way to Starbucks, so that they could get coffee and sweets to help them stay awake. □

Recall scientist Hrant Allanak in "Machine Dreams," a shadowy organization controlling all society.



8MM

Joel Schumacher directs writer Andrew Kevin Walker's follow-up to SEVEN.

By Anthony P. Montesano

For his controversial new Columbia Pictures release **8MM**, screenwriter wunderkind Andrew Kevin Walker has returned once again to the world of moral decay he portrayed so effectively for his 1995 breakthrough masterpiece, **SEVEN**—this time to explore the depraved world of snuff films (in which performers are—supposedly—actually killed on screen).

SEVEN—directed by David Fincher and starring Morgan Freeman and Brad Pitt as detectives on the trail of a bizarre serial killer—was an explosive and revolutionary entry into the genre which generated a volume of journalistic and critical response not seen since, perhaps, Alfred Hitchcock's **PSYCHO**. **8MM** is the first Walker script to hit the screen since **SEVEN** shocked audiences and left Hollywood pundits stunned that a film of such pessimistic intensity could actually garner such mainstream popularity. Walker is currently busy on a number of other genre projects, including the upcoming Tim Burton-directed **SLEEPY HOLLOW**, starring Johnny Depp.

In **8MM**, Academy Award-winner Nicholas Cage (**CITY OF ANGELS**) plays Tom Welles, a private investigator hired by a woman to unravel the origins of a snuff film found among her late husband's belongings. The dangerous journey takes Cage's character deep into the Hell-like underbelly of the illegal porn industry—a sleazy, decadent world where life has no value. Welles is guided through this world by the streetwise Max Hollywood (Joaquin Phoenix). As Welles is pulled deeper into the case his family life breaks down. He struggles to keep his own sanity and rid the depraved images of the 8mm snuff film from his mind.

8MM is filtered through the directorial lens of Joel Schumacher (**BATMAN & ROBIN**, **THE LOST BOYS**) who took time



Nicolas Cage stars as Tom Welles, a surveillance specialist whose latest case immerses him in the world of snuff films and illegal porn.

out from filming his latest effort, **FLAWLESS**, starring Robert DeNiro, to talk about the eagerly awaited, controversial new film.

"I'm a big fan of Andy," said Schumacher. "His script for **8MM** was totally fresh and unique. It's not the standard Hollywood fare. It's not the type of script that is normally sent to you by a studio. This was very dark concept. It took you to places most films don't."

"Most porn today has become mainstream," added Schumacher. "You can rent it at your local videostore; you can see it at hotels and on pay-per-view stations. That's not what this film is about. This is about the world of illegal porn. It's about a culture where human life is not highly regarded.

It's a dark, twisted world. This film is more about evil than sex."

8MM is not the first genre effort to tackle the subject of snuff films. The Michael and Roberta Findlay film **SNUFF** (1974) played a significant role in feeding the urban legend that has built up around such films. Soft-porn-filmmaker-turned-B-movie-producer Alan Shackleton purchased the low-grade exploitation horror film shot in South America, then entitled **SLAUGHTER**. Sensing the public's growing curiosity with the alleged phenomenon of snuff, Shackleton shot a new 15-minute ending for the picture in a loft on West 29th Street in New York which showed a seedy movie crew filming an actress's "murder." Shackleton tacked on this footage and renamed the film **SNUFF**. The advertising campaign carried the tagline "Made in South America, Where Life is Cheap." He booked it into an old Times Square "grind house" with a perpetual loop trailer out in front, and issued for dramatic effect, a disclaimer "to warn people away." To insure publicity, Shackleton reportedly even hired picketers to protest the film outside the theater. The result was a marketing ploy that convinced audiences they were seeing a true snuff film.

Produced in the late 1980s, the Japanese export **GUINEA PIG** features

the matter-of-fact dismemberment of a young woman by a man in a plastic samurai hat. Reportedly among the early viewers of this film was actor Charlie Sheen, who thought the film was real and contacted the FBI about it. The FBI confiscated Sheen's tape and proceeded to investigate all involved, including Charles Balun, an early distributor of the film. Balun claimed the film was a hoax. **GUINEA PIG TWO: THE MAKING OF GUINEA PIG ONE** was released to reveal special effects behind the first film. Reportedly, after viewing this film, the FBI backed off and dropped the investigation. In 1983, David Cronenberg took his stab at the snuff legend with the



Director Joel Schumacher (left) discusses a scene with Cage (middle) and Joaquin Phoenix (right), who plays the streetwise Max Hollywood and Welles' guide through the sleazy underworld of the porn industry.

bizarre **VIDEODROME**, starring James Woods and former Blondie lead singer Deborah Harry.

"It was important for me not to glamorize the world we depict in **8MM**," said Schumacher. "This film is about the lure of Hollywood and the lives of teenage runaways. It's about the illusion that porno is in some way a step toward stardom, that being on film in some way will make you rich overnight. It's about the dark side of human nature." Helping to create the somber look for **8MM** were cinematographer Robert Elswit, who explored the porn world in **BOOGIE NIGHTS** and production designer Gary Wissner, who also served as the art director on **SEVEN**.

Schumacher, who took some heat in certain circles for the direction in which he took the **BATMAN** franchise, says he's glad to take a break from summer blockbusters for a while. "Not that I don't appreciate what those films did for my career," he said. "I do. But I was anxious to get away from the blockbuster movie and get back to nitty gritty filmmaking."

Having worked a great deal with ensemble casts, Schumacher also welcomed the opportunity to direct a project that concentrated primarily on one character. "Nick's character is like someone who has gone off to war and witnessed human atrocities and unimaginable ugliness for the first time," said Schumacher. "It leaves scars. As one character in the film says, 'When you dance with the devil, you don't change the devil; the devil changes you.'"

The exploration of good and

evil has become the staple of an Andrew Kevin Walker script. **BRAINSCAN**, **HIDE-AWAY**, **SEVEN** and now James Woods all deal with a darker side of human nature, one that Schumacher, who has dealt with his own personal demons, seems to have tapped into.

Schumacher expressed a deep fondness for Walker, who, Schumacher says, spent time at his house to discuss his vision for **8MM**. "I'm inspired by his work," said Schumacher. "He's kind and smart and sensitive." The two did differ however on certain key elements of the film. "In Walker's original screenplay," said Schumacher. "Welles much a much older man in the twilight of his career who, at the end of the film, commits suicide. I wanted to explore this character as a much younger person at the beginning of his career."

8MM was given an NC-17 from the ratings board but was cut down to receive an R. Schumacher was pleased that the board worked closely with him as he trimmed the

After directing several ensemble casts, Schumacher welcomed the chance on **8MM** to work exclusively with Cage and just focus on the character of Welles.



“8MM poses the following question: ‘Bad things happen to good people—what are you going to do about it?’”

—Director Joel Schumacher—

film, which he says, retains the “essence of the original cut.” Addressing the more controversial elements of **8MM**—which reportedly include images of a crucified woman and the use of an electric cattle prod—Schumacher believes that, as a nation, we have become “un-shockable.”

“We had two test screenings for **8MM** and no one walked out,” said Schumacher. “Different people are shocked by different things.”

“We’re just trying to keep up with the White House,” the director added, jokingly. “Twenty years or so ago, the *New York Times* couldn’t print the word ‘breast’ in the obituary of a famous woman who died of breast cancer. They had to write ‘cancer.’ Now, we’ve gotten to the point where Katie Couric is discussing anal and oral sex on the **TODAY SHOW**.”

While, at first, the teaming of Schumacher and Walker may seem an odd combination, films such as **FALLING DOWN**, **THE LOST BOYS**, **A TIME TO KILL** and even the **BATMAN** movies have proven that Schumacher is also intrigued by exploring a darker side. “I was once told by a critic that most of my films deal with vigilantism,” said Schumacher. “While I don’t support vigilantism, I can understand why people resort to it. **8MM** poses the following question: ‘Okay, bad things happen to good people—what are you going to do about it?’”

“There’s true inexplicable evil in the world,” concludes Schumacher. “I once heard a National Public Radio report on violence in which the commentator was saying that when we witness violence we often look at each other and ask, ‘How can we do this?’ There’s a simple answer that most of us don’t want to face, he said. People do terrible things because they want to. Not that long ago, an entire nation supported the extermination of a people and many of the people who supported this weren’t monsters; they were just husbands who had families and who went home for the holidays.” □

MY FAVORITE MARTIAN

Director Donald Petrie on turning the '60s TV sitcom into a movie franchise.

By Dennis Fischer

Disney has taken the classic '60s SF sitcom and transformed it into a \$40 million family film for the '90s. Produced by Robert Shapiro (DR. JEKYLL AND MS. HYDE), Jerry Leider, and Mark Toberoff and executive produced by Barry Bernardi, MY FAVORITE MARTIAN is directed by Donald Petrie from a screenplay by Sherri Stoner and Deanna Oliver (CASPER; ANIMANIACS). It stars Jeff Daniels (PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO) as ambitious but down on his luck television producer Tim O'Hara and Christo-



pher Lloyd (BACK TO THE FUTURE) as Uncle Martin, the Martian.

Other characters in the film include O'Hara's camerawoman Lizzie (Daryl Hannah of BLADE RUNNER); conniving reporter Brace Channing (Elizabeth Hurley), daughter of the station manager (Michael Lerner) who's out to break the story of this Martian and use whatever womanly wiles she has to get that story; the mysterious Mr. Armitage (Ray Walston) who backs the SETI project eager to track Martin down; SETI is led by overenthusiastic exobiologist Dr. Elliott Coleye (Wallace Shawn of STRANGE INVADERS and THE PRIN-



Ray Walston as Martin, the Martian in the '60s TV hit, which ran three seasons on CBS. Left: In the movie Walston plays a man-in-black in search of the Martian.

CESS BRIDE); and eccentric next door neighbor Mrs. Brown (Christine Ebersole) who maintains the series tradition of flirting with Martin.

According to producer Robert Shapiro, it took him and partner Jerry Leider five years to develop the script for the film. "It's always been a favorite of mine as a television show," he said. "I was a fan of the television series and I felt the relationship between this person from another world, this stranger in a strange land, and Tim would be very attractive to audiences today."

Shapiro and Leider purchased the rights and brought them to Disney, and developed

the screenplay with Stoner and Oliver. "We discussed several storylines," said Shapiro. "We wanted to make sure that there were enough icons from the series so that it would be familiar for those people who knew it, but since it was going to play to a predominantly new generation, we wanted to have it develop its own voice."

Shapiro in turn asked director Donald Petrie (GRUMPY OLD MEN) to helm the project. Commented Petrie, "I was a big fan of the show growing up, so when they mentioned the idea, I kind of took a shine to it. I thought there was terrific potential there, and a great way to bring it to a whole new generation.

"Usually, studios these days are saying make it smaller, make it cheaper. This was an instance where as soon as they started seeing dailies, they started saying go further, make it bigger, make it bigger. To expand it, utilize the visual effects, take the characters even further than what was called for in the script. That's where most of my contributions on the script came."

The filmmakers said they wanted to stay true to the tone of the original show, which centered around the friendship and bond between the two main characters. Said Shapiro, "We wanted to make sure the movie did not rely on the special effects. We wanted that relationship between Martin and Tim to be strong. If that relationship didn't work, then the movie wouldn't work, no matter how many special effects we had."

In updating the concept for the '90s, Petrie commented, "I think the main difference between then and now is that in those days, the concept of an alien was [simply] men from Mars. Now, with kids who have grown up on STAR WARS and MEN IN

DONALD PETRIE, DIRECTOR

“In the '60s the concept of an alien was [simply] men from Mars. Now the thought of aliens from any number of planets is not at all surprising to kids.”

BLACK, the thought of aliens from any number of millions of planets is not at all surprising to them, so [we needed] to bring a freshness and newness to that.”

Christopher Lloyd was cast because Petrie felt he really embodied both the look of the character, the intelligence of an alien from a more advanced race, and yet he could still be wild and crazy. “The thing that made the series so great,” noted Petrie, “is that every week something would go wrong somehow, somewhere with Uncle Martin, such as sunspots that would make him flash between invisibility and not. True to that form in our scenario, if [Martin] eats ice cream, it’s like an intoxicant to him. He both loves it but will get very drunk if he eats too much.”

Martin’s alien guise, with three eyes, four arms, four legs, a big pot belly, and reddish, leathery skin is animatronic work by Tom Woodruff and Alec Gillis of Amalgamated Dynamics. “When he crashlands here, he is in that form,” said Petrie. “He has a belt on his spacesuit that has these gumball-like objects in it called Nerplex. When he takes an Earth Nerplex, as long as he’s chewing it in his mouth, he takes on the form of a human. Needless to say, if he loses his gum at the wrong time, it can cause an awkward situation. Or if Jeff Daniels as Tim O’Hara finds the wrong gumball and pops it into his mouth, things happen.”

Noted Shapiro, “There’s a gumball or Nerplex that he carries from a planet called Renox 7, with a hostile environment. [Martin] tells Tim not to touch the gumball. Later on that Renox 7 becomes quite important when Lizzie chews the Nerplex and changes into this CGI creature which we call the Lizzie Monster and beats up the bad guys. That was a creature designed by Phil Tippett.”

MY FAVORITE MARTIAN adds a new character, Zoot, created by the screenwriters, who is the first fully CGI character to run throughout a movie. Explained Shapiro, “When he arrives in his Martian form, he is wearing a silver spacesuit. This spacesuit has a silver buckle, and eventually after Martin meets Tim, he feels that he has to blend in and appear as if he were an Earthling. He abandons his suit, and his suit is alive. It’s a Zootnex Polymorphic 3000, which is the brand of this particular Martian suit.

“This Martian suit can talk, and it is an animated character much in the same vein as Roger Rabbit or the magic carpet in ALADDIN. It’s an amazing character that was rendered by Phil Tippett’s company. [Tippett]’s brilliant. Zoot is not a servant of Martin, he’s his friend, but he does things for him. I guess he’s like his Sancho Panza. Kind of like the Gielgud character in his attitude toward Dudley Moore in ARTHUR.”

Petrie directs Daryl Hannah as Lizzie, O’Hara’s camerawoman, befuddled by the appearance of Martin’s ship.



Christopher Lloyd stars as Martin, the Martian, and Jeff Daniels plays television producer Tim O’Hara, his reluctant Earthly host. Below: Martin uses a molecular condenser to reduce his 20 foot spaceship in size for tooling around Earth’s highways and living rooms. The film opens nationwide February 12.





Zoot is an all-new, all-CGI character that runs throughout the film, Martin's sentient spacesuit, who is miffed to be shed so Martin can blend-in on Earth.



That Martin would want to separate from him makes Zoot feel hurt. Explained Petrie, "The main thing that I wanted, if it was truly going to be a suit of clothes, I didn't want it to look like the invisible man where it has a human shape all the time but doesn't have a head or hands or feet.

"[Zoot] could squeeze all the air out and roll up into a ball. He's only grounded by what happens with cloth. We also needed a way for a headless suit to be able to speak, so we relied very much on both mime and we gave him a very high, arched collar, almost like Elvis would have worn. That in essence, when manipulated, kind of becomes his mouth and his head. It really was truly the animation that brought that to life."

To assist in working out Zoot's movement, the company hired mime Jean-Luc from the Cirque du Soleil to assist the actors and help the animators to line up the

shots. Petrie found Phil Tippett and his group, who did the character of Zoot amazing. "Trey Stokes, who was the lead animator on the project, really brought a lot to the table," he said. "I don't want someone who is just going to do what I tell them, I want somebody who's going to say, 'Hey, what if...the Martian did this!' Wow! Great! Let's give it a shot.

"The same with John Van

Shopping for Earth duds, Martin razzes an obnoxious kid, Martian-style.



DONALD PETRIE, DIRECTOR

“ [Directing effects], there’s a famous triangle: quality, cost, and speed. The learning curve was incredible. I was a neophyte, and now I feel I could do STAR WARS.”

Vliet of Available Light [who handled the spaceship scenes]. He’s such a wonderful animator, he was able to take scenes that although they would have been technically wonderful, he added that extra sense of humor, extra bit of fun to it that pushes it over the edge.”

Petrie is new to working on special effects films, but found that they have their pleasures as well as their frustrations. Commented the director, “You direct effects the same way you would an actor, only you’re dealing with the intricacies of an animator and the limitations of the science. And of course, the limitations of the almighty dollar. There is that famous triangle: quality, cost, and speed, take any two.

“The learning curve was incredible. I was a neophyte, and now I feel I could do STAR WARS.”

Petrie said he adjusted to the slow pace of effects work by double scheduling. “I’m used to working very quickly. I would schedule a scene to shoot on one end of the sound stage while they are setting up motion control on the other, and would just run back and forth between the two so that I could keep going.”

Petrie also complained that

the noisiness of the motion control rigs force him to loop the actors’ dialogue. “That’s never great, but one does it,” he said.

One of the big setpieces, created in response to the studio mandate to make the film bigger, gives an indication of its outrageous humor. Petrie describes the scene with relish: “One of the contraptions that Uncle Martin has is a molecular condenser. It looks like a little car remote, only he does boop boop and his 20 foot spaceship reduces down to the size of a shoe box. And at one point when they are escaping the SETI guys, they get into Tim’s old Plymouth Valient to escape the Hummers and Suburbans that are after them.

“Indeed, the road block is up ahead, and boop boop, they shrink and go right under. They all of a sudden are in this little car zipping down the road. Huge chunks of earth start flying because they are being shot at. At their size, it’s like artillery shells going off.

“‘Quick, duck into that garage.’ They pull into the sewer, into the gutter. They stall just four feet into the pipe, but out of reach of the SETI guys. But Wally Shawn spots a roto-rooter, and says, ‘Get that thing over here.’

“They get the car started just in time and have a wild chase through the sewer system being chased by the whirling blades of a roto-rooter. They see their route blocked by a grate. They see a smaller pipe going off. They reduce the car again. They’re the size of a matchbox car now, and they escape the roto-rooter by going up a side tunnel, and they are going up, up, up, but they’ve escaped.

“They splash through water. Silence. Where the hell are we? A voice, off, ‘Elma, where’s my Field and

Stream?’ ‘In the bathroom honey, where you left it.’ Their point-of-view, the toilet opens. Mr. Butts is about to do his business. They have to hit the compressor button, and the next thing this guy knows, he’s sitting like a hood ornament on the hood of a car, going crashing through the wall, through the front of the house and out into the street, and onto the sidewalk.”

Petrie, who worked with Walston on the PICKET FENCES series, is proud that Walston has been given an actual part rather than just a cameo. “I love Ray,” he said. “Having done GRUMPY OLD MEN, it’s great working with these guys who have a wealth of knowledge and stories. It certainly makes for an entertaining set when you have someone like Ray Walston.”

Among other things Petrie said he learned from making the film, he “really learned how tough it can be for the actors when they have whole scenes [playing against nothing], such as Jeff Daniels did—he had a fight scene with the suit that wasn’t there. A tug of war even, on either end of a golf club. Now that it’s all in, you forget the fact. He made it look so easy. It’s so seamless, you forget that when he was playing that scene, he was playing it solo. He really did an outstanding job. That to me was the most fun.”

Regarding the look of the



The killer creature from *Renox 7*, just one of the CGI oddities that pop up when characters eat Martin’s Nerplex, gum-like balls located on his spacesuit belt which allow him to take the form of the inhabitants of any planet that he travels to.

film, Petrie commented, “It’s funny, [production designer] Sandy Veneziano has run the gamut. She’s done both the STAR TREK type movies with vast spaceships and things like that, but also did FATHER OF THE BRIDE, very down to Earth. I really wanted to keep it Earthbound, to keep it so that the more normal everything is on Earth, the more extraordinary the alien influence will be on it. That was kind of our modus operandi there.”

The film will reprise the distinctive theme for the TV show,

composed by the original show’s producer, the late Jack Chertok, which will be interwoven with a new Martian theme composed by Danny Elfman. The score for the film itself was composed by John Debney.

The film was initially edited by Malcolm Campbell, who had to leave the project because he had a prior commitment to work on the remake of THE INCREDIBLE MR LIMPET, and was completed by Donald Camburn, who’s president of the editing guild and somebody

Petrie and Shapiro had known for years.

Shapiro summed up the movie by saying, “the object is to make people laugh. It’s very funny, it’s very touching, and on top of that has amazing special effects. And in each reel, one of the great things about it is that just when you think it’s going in one particular direction, we kind of surprise you and take you in another direction that I don’t think you can see coming.”

Petrie hoped that audiences will experience a wild ride, and be affected by the characters. “The Martian, who is all statistics and numbers and science, learns to cut loose a little bit, and Tim, who is also a fact-driven kind of guy, through the chaos brought into his life, learns to cut loose a little bit.”

The filmmakers claimed the movie did very well during preview testing. Regarding audience reaction, Shapiro noted, “I think they are going to have a hell of a good time. It’s a movie that’s fast paced, it’s funny, it has its tender moments, it has some things they have never seen before, and I think what I would like them to come away with is to tell their friends, ‘Wow, I really had a good time.’” They hope that the former television series can be turned into a film franchise. □

Jeff Daniels is horrified as he begins to metamorphose after eating one of Martin’s Nerplex, mistaking it for a gumball.



FI

Bending genres

By Dan Scapperotti

They're here and they're out to get us! Continuing the paranoid conspiracy theory that we're all in imminent danger of being taken over by aliens from another world which fomented with *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* and continues today through the *X-FILES*, writer Chris Brancato and executive producer Francis Ford Coppola have come up with a new twist. The *FIRST WAVE* of the alien infiltration is in progress. Growing the human "husks" in a secret genetics plant and using synthetic human DNA, the aliens have disguised themselves as breathtakingly beautiful humans. Their objective is to determine the feasibility of conquering the Earth. If they decide the planet is ripe for colonization a secret code will be activated which will launch the deadly Second Wave. The ambitious science fiction series, already aired in Canada, debuts on the Sci-Fi Channel in March.

While Coppola's active participation in the production of *THE FIRST WAVE* is minimal, his stamp of approval was vital to getting the show off the ground. "People are interested in what Francis Ford Coppola is going to involve himself in," said Chris Brancato. "The fact that he thought it was a cool idea and loves science fiction and decided to get involved was very helpful in pulling together financing. Without him I don't think we could have gotten the show up and rolling."

Joining the burgeoning group of filmmakers who have flocked to Canada, and especially Vancouver, to take advantage of a talented labor pool, the strong American dollar and those seductive Canadian subsidies is producer Larry Sugar. "The series is grounded in a much more creative dramatic genre than most of them are," said Sugar whose western anthology series, *DEAD MAN'S GUN* airs on Showtime. "While we deal actively with the world of science fiction we keep it as grounded in reality as possible. There hasn't been to my knowledge any series that combined two really successful formats, the science fiction alien format with the *FUGITIVE* format. It's *THE FUGITIVE MEETS X FILES*."

Experiment AHX-138 was designed to test the limits of human endurance, both



Sebastian Spence as Cade Foster, levitating in "Speaking in Tongues," an episode of *FIRST WAVE*, a series produced by Francis Ford Coppola, Larry Sugar and Chris Brancato, debuting on the Sci-Fi Channel in March. Below: Allen experiments gone awry in "Lung Fish," makeup by Steve Johnson's XFX.



FIRST WAVE

makes for a smooth ride on Sci-Fi Channel.

physical and emotional. The aliens picked 117 people for their initial torturous study. All but four were dead within six months. One, Subject 117, Cade Foster, played by Sebastian Spence, exceeded experimental expectations with devastating results for the aliens. They may have created the seed of their own defeat.

"They tear apart his life," explained screenwriter Chris Brancato. "They drain his bank account and indict him for the murder of his wife. They visit upon him all manner of terrible trials and travails through which he unexpectedly emerges. As the series begins he hits the road FUGITIVE style determined to awaken the world that they're in terrible danger. The aliens are here!"

Foster is a former thief who has mended his larcenous ways and becomes an upstanding citizen. Suddenly, he finds that he has to pick up the tools of his previous occupation and use those skills against the encroaching menace. Not only must Foster contend with the aliens, but law enforcement agencies are also on his trail as well as a mysterious government agent. In the first episode, Foster finds a long lost text of Nostradamus prophecies which he will use as a guide that leads him from place to place as the series progresses. The show postulates that Nostradamus may have predicted the arrival of these aliens and he may have left some clues on how to find them and defeat them.

Although alone and on the run, Foster is not without his allies. The most potent of these, and a series regular, is Crazy Eddie Nambulous played by Rob Labell. "He's this brilliant, kooky, lovable techno wiz," said Sugar. "Eddie is his link both metaphorically and actually to his search for the aliens. He helps Cade with his changing identities and in gaining information as when he has to play a scientist or to find a locale in a distant forest. Eddie has his cell phone and his computer and access to the internet. He also runs an internet newspaper called The Paranoid Times whose byline is "Believe the Unbeliev-



Series creator and producer Chris Brancato, during filming in Vancouver, giving the hoary concept of THE FUGITIVE an extraterrestrial sci-fi spin.

able."

One of the factors that segregates THE FIRST WAVE from the pack of alien encounter shows, past and present, is the erotic nature of Brancato's creation. These invaders are not the proverbial bug-eyed monsters of the pulps, but beautiful creatures even in their alien form. Since the aliens' concept of the human condition was derived via television transmissions the resulting husks are beautiful, "The BAY-WATCH factor" as Brancato calls it.

"They look very good," said Brancato, "and are able to mix well with our cultures and basically sleep their way to the top in some instances. This is one of the most important things about the series. One of the areas in television science fiction that I think is missing is the notion of what made SPECIES and SPECIES II really fun movies which is sexy sci-fi. In our show the alien's decision to make their human forms extremely good looking has been an incredible benefit to their infiltration. They found it easy because we humans beings are attracted to beauty. I think that one of the things SPECIES showed us was that when you mix science fiction with a sleek sensual sexy sort of vibe what you get is compelling television and compelling sci-fi. The aliens use their sexual powers over humans to maintain their grip. To bend human beings to their will."

Sex on the alien planet is not only a painful experience, but it is mandated by government decree for procreation. "When they're in what they call 'husks,' our human forms, they discover that sex is pleasurable," said Sugar. "So they all like to make love. The sets where they're growing the humans are very sexy. The eroticism is a factor on the show. It's worked in when its appropriate to the story line. We have nudity for cable but we do coverage for free TV as well."

The character of Colonel Leon Justice Grace, the shadowy figure who is searching for Cade to question him about the alien plans, was originally penned as a man, but along the way Grace changed genders. Brancato decided to put a new spin on the stock character often seen as some 65-year-old military guy skilled in combat and torture. The character became Colonel Leona Grace played by actress Dana Brooks.

Noted Brancato, "She represents an organization called the Illuminati, very powerful individuals who have banded together and secretly control the operations of world governments and the banking systems to further their own ends. They may want to strike a deal with the aliens to ensure their own positions of power, or they might want to spearhead a defense against them."

The role of the Illuminati won't really come to the fore until second season. "We've decided that we want to make sure that Cade Foster battles on a week to week basis with the people we're most interested in finding out about, which are the aliens," said Brancato. "So at this point we've just dipped our toes in the water suggesting that she's an operative for the Illuminati. It's more of a second season conceit for the show."

"What would a sci-fi series be without those state of the art special effects? Brancato had worked with Steve Johnson when the latter helmed the effects for both the SPECIES films and brought the effects supervisor to the attention of the producers. "There are physical and CGI special effects

FIRST WAVE

MAKEUP EFFECTS

FXF supervisor Steve Johnson on designing “beautiful” aliens.

By Dan Scapperotti

When series creator Chris Brancato got the green light, the first one he thought about to handle the requisite special effects was Steve Johnson. Brancato had worked with the visual effects supervisor when he penned the screenplay for SPECIES II. Northwestern Effects Group, Johnson's Canadian division, currently produces effects for several genre television shows including THE OUTER LIMITS, POLTERGEIST, and STARGATE.

“There are quite a few aliens which appear in different forms,” Johnson explained. “They're basically humanoid, but when their emotions reach a peak they flash to an indication of what they're life form really looks like and they also cause hallucinations.

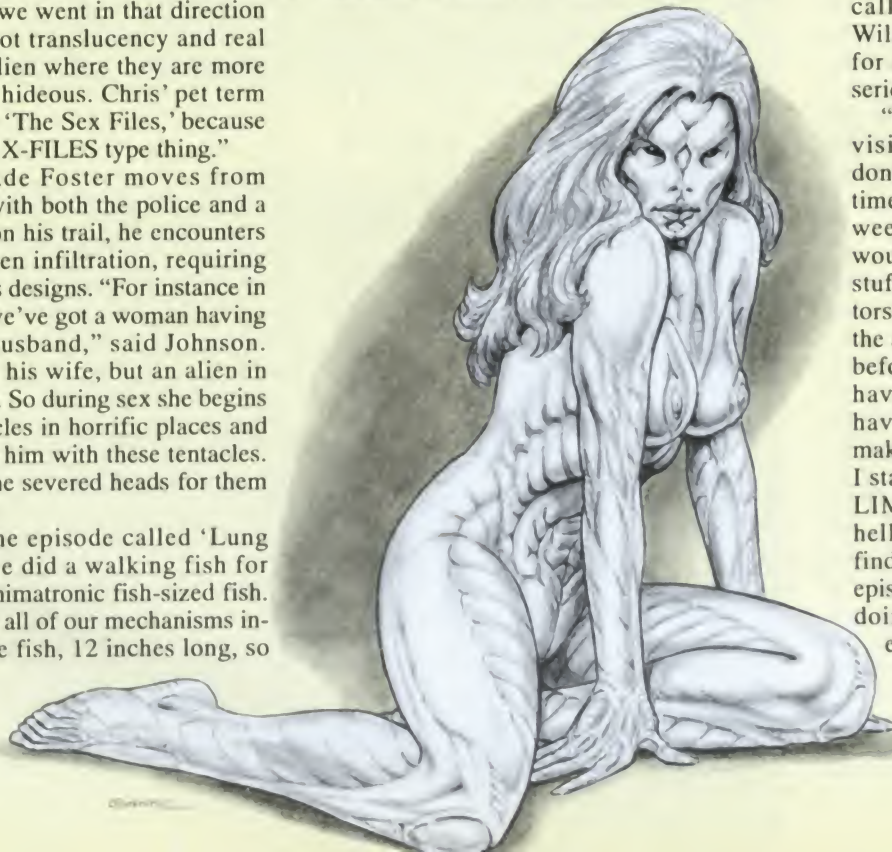
“We had done SPECIES II with Chris and he had really liked the translucent quality of the aliens and the fact that they were very, very beautiful aliens as opposed to monstrous. So we went in that direction where we've got translucency and real beauty to the alien where they are more attractive than hideous. Chris' pet term for the show is ‘The Sex Files,’ because it's a very sexy X-FILES type thing.”

As hero Cade Foster moves from town to town with both the police and a secret society on his trail, he encounters evidence of alien infiltration, requiring different effects designs. “For instance in the first show we've got a woman having sex with her husband,” said Johnson. “It's not really his wife, but an alien in his wife's form. So during sex she begins to sprout tentacles in horrific places and ends up killing him with these tentacles. We've also done severed heads for them and some gore.

“There's one episode called ‘Lung Fish’ where we did a walking fish for them. It's an animatronic fish-sized fish. We couldn't fit all of our mechanisms into one real size fish, 12 inches long, so

we made three different versions of the fish for different functions. The base aliens, the ones that the story is about, try to set up a work force under the ocean so they're experimenting on what might make the best work force. They're turning humans into fish and fish into people. We did prosthetics for humans who are being transformed as well to make them more fish-like.”

Johnson's team created different versions of the aliens. These creatures are able to project hallucinations in humans which may make them see the aliens in different manifestations. “The aliens are very beautiful,” said Johnson. “They're purples and blues and translucent. The fact is that you never really see them. What we did was we made a bunch of accuform pieces much like we did on SPECIES that actors could wear such as faces, hands, and different body parts. We'll digitally map that on to the real person at times so if a person gets real angry for instance her face will start to waiver and then digitally be blended into our face



The Fishman of “Go Fish,” as the aliens try to breed an undersea race, design by Kerry Gammill, sculpt by Nori Honda, applied by David Dupuis.

and then waiver back on to the human face. It's kind of a ‘did you really see it or didn't you?’ We did the tentacle a little more like we did on PHANTOMS. We had a lot of reverse effects and pneumatics like on SPECIES.”

Sean Taylor is based in LA and coordinates the work on all the episodes for the series while Patrick Bartolo is his Canadian counterpart. Working both out of their Los Angeles and Vancouver locations the effects team would build their effects pieces in California and ship them up to Canada. An animatronic piece built in L.A. would be shipped north along with a person who would be in charge of it on set.

The show boasts quite a few computer effects. That's the domain of a company called Rainmaker in Vancouver. Lee Wilson is the visual effects supervisor for all the CGI work generated for the series.

“The difficulty, as in all episodic television, is really just getting the stuff done on time,” said Johnson. “A lot of times the scripts don't get to you until a week or two before you shoot and that wouldn't necessarily make building the stuff really difficult if you have the actors. But typically on television like this the actors don't get hired until three days before you shoot. So a lot of time if we have a specific appliance to build we have to build a generic piece and just make it fit on the day of shooting. When I started my episodic work on OUTER LIMITS about three years ago it was hell. I just look at it differently now. I find it challenging. We've got over 120 episodes of television per year that we're doing out of the Canadian company. I enjoy meeting the challenge.” □

Kerry Gammill's design for the aliens that will be glimpsed only briefly. The aliens find Earth sex pleasurable and use it to advance their agenda.

in every episode,” producer Larry Sugar advised. “We have anything from an alien flash, which is kind of a signature of the aliens when they’re frustrated or about to attack or having sex when they will become recognizable to our regular viewers, to a specific design for when they are killed. The way that they transfer is through a device that we would call an orb and this orb contains the consciousness that they can put into any husk they want. They grow humans. They make bodies that look like ours and they’re all beautiful people.”

Brancato realized that finding something new to incorporate into science fiction is difficult, especially for an hour long television series, but he thinks he has come up with a solution. “There are only so many dramatic situations you can tell,” he said. “So we had to decide how to create stories that are going to be wonderful and interesting and aren’t going to be carbon copies of some other series or some other show. The premise of this show is the fusing of two genres—science fiction with the FUGITIVE story. So we’re taking two genres that are pretty well established and mixing them together creating something that has a spin on it and is fresh. We try to do that on an individual episode basis.

“For instance ‘Crazy Eddie,’ the second show, almost takes the form of a mini-buddy movie. It’s like 48 HOURS but with science fiction. ‘Hypnotic’ is a little bit like the movie COMMUNION, but we’re mixing in our own brand of FIRST WAVE logic. We have an episode coming up, ‘Book of Shadows’ that is about witchcraft, but it mixes the typical witchcraft story with science fiction. It’s about a girl baking a witches brew of cookies that actually kill aliens. We’re taking traditional genres and putting a sci-fi spin on them. We have one about a bank heist. Foster believes that there is alien evidence in a bank and he and his pal Crazy Eddie have to do this heist to get this information and in the middle they get trapped in the bank much like DOG DAY AFTERNOON.”

The genre-bending series will feature Foster investigating a town where the elderly residents are getting younger every day in “Elixir.” He joins an alien abduction therapy group in “Hypnotic” trying to learn of similarities in their stories and learn that something strange is happening behind the scenes. Your wildest fantasies come to life when you enter the strange gothic hotel in “Motel California.” Foster tracks a psychic spy in “Mata Hari” when he goes to a Boston university where young geniuses are being found dead on campus. Masquerading as a brilliant math

CHRIS BRANCATO, WRITER

“The premise of this show is the fusing of science fiction with the FUGITIVE story. We’re taking two genres, mixing them, creating something with a spin to it.”



Watch your back!—Spence as Cade, on the run from the omnipresent aliens and threatened by a beautiful alien fifth columnist in “Motel California.”

scientist he tries to discover if alien or human hands are at work. “Speaking In Tongues” finds Foster traveling into the deep South to rescue a young woman who has fallen under the spell of a young preacher whose followers are slave-like devotees. He must try to expose the preacher as an alien.

“‘Marker 262’ is a fucking cool episode,” said Brancato. “Two teenagers are drag racing on a highway and the winner’s vehicle just disappears into thin air. Foster comes to town guided by a Nostrodamus quatrain, as he always is. The kids’ strange disappearance seems to dovetail with what it says in the quatrain which basically says something about steel chariots disappearing into a still clear night. He shows up posing as a transportation safety board official and what he discovers is that the aliens are trying to create mini Bermuda Triangles all over the United States. They’re trying to create quantum fields where our planes and missiles will disappear if we were trying to ward off an attack.”

These extraterrestrials won’t be using the pidgin English of those unfamiliar with the language. “I’m trying to avoid the Star Trek aliens,” Brancato explained, “people who talk in monosyllabic words. They’re just like us. They’re in our bodies. They curse, they use contractions in their sentences. Because they’re in our bodies they act like us, so they talk like us. I think that’s a cool notion of aliens to make them virtually indistinguishable from humans. We’ll learn more about them and ultimately we’ll learn more about the other forces on the planet who know that the aliens are here outside of Foster.”

In “Speaking in Tongues,” episode 6, the viewer is introduced to another new character, Joshua, an alien with a conscience. Brancato wanted to include a powerful alien who has become disenchanted with his planet’s mission to Earth. Roger Cross, who has appeared in such Vancouver productions as STARGATE, was cast as Joshua. “He’s not a traitor,” Brancato quickly pointed out. “He believes deeply in his people. I liken him to a German general in World War II who was a German patriot but who would fight against Hitler because he knew what Hitler was trying to do was wrong for Germany. He is someone who would have the conscience and the intelligence to question his own group’s mission. He would become an unlikely ally for Foster.”

Although the aliens use advanced worm hole technology to travel the billions of light years to Earth, they’ve decided to save those transportation charges on the human husks they use to walk among us. To that end they’ve made devices that capture their own consciousness.

“They’ve grown their human bodies here on this planet,” Brancato explained. “They’ve used synthetic DNA and a little of their own alien DNA to create husks with strength and a certain beauty to them. Then they simply upload their consciousness into these husks. If they want to return to their planet they digitally download their consciousness back into an orb, a little steel capsule, and it would go back to their planet. So we don’t even know what they look like in their own world. I just love the concept of home-grown aliens. They’re grown in pods which are free-standing pedestals. They’ve managed to speed the growing process up so they’re able to grow the husks of any different variety. They can grow one who’s a 17-year-old alien girl. Whatever suits their purposes.”

The aliens aren’t immune to the weakness of the humans’ drug culture, but it isn’t cocaine or crack that can be their downfall. More than a pinch of salt and the aliens are hooked. “Basically salt,” said Brancato, “which you’ll learn when you see episode nine ‘Joshua,’ which we use on our food every day, is actually like morphine to the aliens. So they’ve discovered that here on this planet some of them are developing powerful salt addictions that will ultimately give Foster a leg up. Imagine if you have a drug that potentially can be addictive to your enemies. A common drug that doesn’t bother you at all. You might be able to get information from them or use it as a weapon against them.” □

TEXAS BLOOD MO

Scott Spiegel works FROM DUSK TILL DAWN

By Jon Keeyes

In 1982 a low budget horror film called *THE EVIL DEAD* was unleashed on the world. Not only did the film set a new standard for horror, it introduced audiences to a crew of talented individuals including Sam Raimi, Bruce Campbell and Scott Spiegel.

This March, director and screenwriter Scott Spiegel will be returning to his favorite genre as he releases *TEXAS BLOOD MONEY*, a sequel to Robert Rodriguez's *FROM DUSK TILL DAWN*. "Quentin Tarantino and I went to the opening of *FROM DUSK TILL DAWN* and we met Bob Weinstein there," said Spiegel. "I had been working on *HALLOWEEN 6* and had gotten pretty far along when Moustapha Akkad decided he wanted his own guy for the project, but it had given me a history with Bob. So when the *DUSK TILL DAWN* sequel came up he suggested, 'Hey, let's get Scott to do it.' So I got this call and I was like cool. I came up with this story with a friend and pitched it and Bob and Quentin liked it. What was really nice was that I got to come up with the story instead of being handed a script and told to go direct it."

Having also worked on the *EVIL DEAD* sequel, Spiegel was well versed on the possible pitfalls of writing a story that would continue the *DUSK TILL DAWN* franchise. Explained Spiegel, "When Sam Raimi and I wrote *EVIL DEAD 2* we had problems because we couldn't get the rights to the first one. We concocted this sort of condensed version of the first film but only Bruce Campbell and the girl were there; the other three people never existed and the fans got really pissed. So I learned early on you have to be careful what you do. In my first scenario for *TEXAS BLOOD MONEY*, George Clooney gets killed by the cops while his bank robbing buddies are waiting for him to show up with their split of the money from the first movie's bank job. And then they were going to put all their money into a bigger job in Mexico. Well, George would get killed, it's all over the news, and the guys would know they were just at the *Titty Twister*, so maybe Ritchie's still there. They go back there, Ritchie's now the king of the vampires and all hell breaks loose. But Quentin was really hesitant about



Featuring a whole new line-up of lovelies—and the same old snake—the *Titty Twister* is open for business again. Right: Robert Patrick as bank robber Buck.

is versatile and so fun. He makes everybody laugh on the set. He knows reverse-motion and all these technical aspects which is really refreshing. I can't talk him up enough. Plus,



bringing Ritchie back so he went and restructured the whole thing to sort of stand by itself, where it's like Camp Crystal Lake or the *Psycho* house: the same location but with a whole new set of people.

"The story is that Robert Patrick [*TERMINATOR 2*] has this buddy who is on the run from the cops. His buddy was going to be put in jail by the cops so he calls up Robert and says, 'I'm on the run, man, but that Mexican bank job is back on. Round up a crew and meet me across the border at the El Coyote Motel.' So Robert rounds up 'The Magnificent Seven'. Well, in the meantime, Robert's guy Luther hits a bat and screws up his jeep, and the next thing you see is him walking up to the *Titty Twister*. He talks to Danny Trejo—the only returning member from the first one—and he tells Danny he needs a cab because he hit a bat and Danny takes great interest in this. Eventually, Luther gets bit and shows up at the El Coyote Motel as a vampire. They end up robbing the bank and it's about all the complications that arise as the guys begin turning into vampires."

While George Clooney and Quentin Tarantino's characters don't appear in this sequel, one actor that joined the project was Spiegel's long time friend Bruce Campbell. "Bruce and Tiffany Amber-Thiesen are in a pre-credit sequence. They unfortunately get it by a bunch of bats in a high-rise elevator; the poor bastards," laughed Spiegel. "Bruce

Bruce and I go back to 1974, making silly super-8 movies in Detroit. We were stealing Three Stooges plots and shooting on reel-to-reel. It was about '74 that we graduated to cassette recorders and became really sophisticated. Bruce became our resident star and then we hooked up with Sam Raimi because we were all in school together. With all that history there you can begin to see why so many directors work with the same actors over and over again."

With a cast lined up, Spiegel optioned to take 40 shooting days in Capetown, South Africa over 21 days in the States. Even though the extra time was a benefit for Spiegel, the lack of equipment and foreign social strife made life very interesting during production. Explained Spiegel, "As beautiful as Capetown was there was a 'life is cheap' mentality and for me that was a really traumatic thing. We were location scouting and some psychos in a station wagon zip past us at about 120 miles-per-hour. I said 'Wow, I give that guy six months to live,' and literally four seconds later they hit the concrete median and flipped over and the guy videoing the locations videoed the last half of that. One guy made it out but the rest died. I felt kinda like the Wicked Witch of the East just waiting for a house to drop on my head. Even though we were at peace in our warehouse during shooting, when we got out on the roads it was frightening. There's no police presence and that was the really freaky thing

NEY

for the sequel.


for me.”

Amidst the minor external turmoil, Spiegel was still able to delve into his creative talents and pull out what he considers some memorable film footage. “I was able to put myself in my own world, like when the gang is cracking the safe and they’re working on the tumbler and I’ve got a tumbler point-of-view that the kids call the dizzy scene and just oddball stuff shot through phone cords, and vampire POV’s where this one guy gets his head cut off and everything is black and then you see the gore as the head is ripping away and then you see the guy’s face reacting or another scene from inside a vampire’s mouth as he bites a neck and blood shoots into the camera. I used oddball stuff that tries to take a new perspective on things you’ve seen a thousand times before. I’m just trying to put my own stamp on things. I definitely come from the Sam Raimi school of filming where you really try to get creative.”

Spiegel’s talents will be tested as Dimension Films uses the project to pursue a new idea of high-budget straight to video films. “Quentin and Bob Weinstein were saying this is going to be like LION KING 2 with billboards on the sides of buses and television ads and such; things even some theatrical releases don’t get. So that was Bob’s original intention that they’ll spend \$4 or \$5 million on these really great videos because they did PROPHECY 2 to video and that turned out pretty good. There’s the potential of doing a midnight shows release like they did with THE BEYOND. As a matter of fact, Bob has even talked about releasing all three DUSK TILL DAWN films in some sort of weird midnight festival. Of course, they would have to wait until HANGMAN’S DAUGHTER [the prequel] was completed. As for video, it’s weird, the industry’s got this ‘only available on video’ thing going on and I’m amazed because it used to be that direct video was a curse. But then you’ve got people like Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez attached and those are very exploitable elements—not to mention having the Terminator starring in your movie.” □

Danny Trejo as Razor Eddie (top), back at his old job as bartender. Middle: Your worst fear, a vampire (Muse Watson) with a gun! Bottom: Luther (Duane Whitaker) takes out a bank guard. Street date 3/23.





SOLDIER

Matte World Digital on creating effects that give the film its science fiction scope.

By Lawrence French

Matte painting, the long established art of creating scenic backgrounds for movies, has recently undergone a dramatic metamorphosis. As with many other areas of effects work, computers have rendered traditional 2-D matte techniques, as showcased by such past masters of the art as Albert Whitlock (*THE BIRDS*, *EARTHQUAKE*), and Peter Ellenshaw (*20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA*, *BLACK NARCISSUS*) all but a lost art. A leading force in the brave new era of digital painting, are the talented artists at Matte World Digital, including ILM alumni, Chris Evans and Craig Barron. Recently, Matte World's work was showcased in the Kurt Russell science-fiction epic, *SOLDIER*, as well as Disney's re-make of *MIGHTY JOE YOUNG*.

Barron, the founder and owner of Matte World, explained that, "things have changed rather significantly

since we were doing original in-camera negative shots for films like *BATMAN RETURNS* and *DRACULA*. The latent image technique has changed very little since it was first developed around the turn of the century. But now, thanks to these new computer tools, we can create images that are still engaging and dynamic, but give us a lot more flexibility in moving the camera. It allows us to dynamically move through what would

have been a 2-D painting, and get a third dimension to it."

On *SOLDIER*, Matte World Digital contributed almost 30 digital environmental shots to the finished film, including scenes set on a junkyard Planet, "Arcadia 234," which has a dense atmosphere of smog and haze, as well as four suns. "For inspiration we looked to photography of the Grand Canyon, and other scenic environments that had large mountains," said

Kurt Russell shot blue screen for a pull back and lift up to establish the junk planet's environment (above). The white spheres are tracking targets used to recover the camera move to photograph the matte painting. Dust and clouds are added digitally.



Barron. "But instead of using pristine rock formations in places like Monument Valley, we had to create piles of used technology, that had been dumped on this planet. David Synder was the art director, and he gave us some good basic sketches, but we ended up designing the final look of the environments ourselves, with director Paul Anderson's approval. We worked hard to establish a mood that gave you the more dramatic aspects of the landscapes. It was a look that evolved from showing Paul Anderson, the director, different concepts of what the environment on this planet could look like through a series of quick test renderings."

For a spectacular crane shot, that starts with a close shot of Kurt Russell standing on top of a mountain of debris, then pulls back to reveal the twisted piles of junk that surrounds him, Barron and his colleagues needed to find a way to match the live-action camera move, (done on a studio set), so it could be du-



Matte World's dramatic sunset, a digital matte painting with CGI dust, multiple suns and moving clouds. Russell (right), filmed blue screen on the partial set.

plicated by the virtual camera in the computer. Then, the 3-D painted elements could be added to create a realistic background to the shot. "Over the years, directors keep coming back and asking us for these big pull back shots," said Barron. "It's very difficult to do that in motion control, because in this case it was a crane shot, that needed about 80 feet of track, and a live action motion control camera was not something that was readily available to do that. It also had to rise all the way to the top of the stage, to get the feeling of a giant pullback. So we had to find a way to recover the camera movement through

software, as opposed to using motion control. Our solution was to develop a system of white spheres, that we placed around Russell, who was photographed on a partial set, in front of a blue-screen."

Digital matte artist, Brett Northcutt, then went to work adding the planet's imaginary landscape to the shot. "The fun thing about doing digital matte paintings, is you can have lots of layers to them," enthused Northcutt. "The suns are painted behind the clouds, and the clouds have painted holes in them, so you can see the sun shining through the moving clouds. Then we can animate all



A digital matte painting (below) adds distant mountains, blowing CGI dust and moving clouds to the miniature tabletop photography of "Big Daddy" (right).





the separate layers to make them move and look much more realistic. Everything was done on the computer, and I was using reference photographs to get the right textures for the piles of garbage, and the sky. There were three or four skies that I put together to get the final effect. Then Brian Ringseis animated all kinds of moving junk elements that went into the shot. Big pieces of metal flapping in the wind, and dust clouds that were all done with CGI.

Paul Rivera, the compositing supervisor at Matte World, revealed that the complex sky painting had over 50 layers to it. "It was an entire painting done on the computer, that was eventually simplified down to six layers," said Rivera. "Brett starts the painting as base elements, the sky and the mountains, and then we take them and break them apart and add a digital parallax to make everything appear 3-D."

Although the planet was full of high-tech garbage, Chris Evans found that the heavy haze and dust inherent in the planet's atmosphere, lent itself to an artistic influence from the 19th century. "There's a golden glowing quality to this planet," remarked Evans, "because of the multiple suns in the sky, that

Matte World's digital painting with 3D junk, moving clouds and blowing dust (above) is added to the blue screen moving shot of the Trench.

are very low to the horizon, lighting everything up with this amber light. As artists with a painting background, Brett and I found it interesting to look at some of the 19th-century American landscape paintings done by Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran and Frederic Church. They did these paintings of the American west, which have this golden, ambient light to them, which they got as a kind of carryover from European romantic painting. They imposed a kind of atmospheric glow onto America, which was the actual set-up of this planet—except in-

stead of Indian encampments on the ground, you have these piles of junked aircraft carrier, lying on its side like a beached whale, amid the mountains of garbage on the windy planet. "The aircraft carrier was a real model that they sent to us," noted Morgen Trotter. Usually, really large things like that are easier to build in the computer, but on the other hand, it's a lot easier to make miniatures look dirty and realistic."

A more contemporary influence on Evans and Northcutt, were the architectural designs of Lebbeus Woods. "He's taken these war-torn cities, like Bosnia," explained Northcutt, "and done some amazing build-

ing designs for them. They're made up of a kind of futuristic metal that's just patched together. One of his designs looked to me like a pile of garbage—it was just made of pieces of corrugated metal, but put together in an interesting way. We also went to junkyards to take pictures, and that turned out to be one of the hardest things to get, because nobody would let us take pictures of their garbage. They thought we were from the EPA, or else we were doing some sort of illegal activity. Finally we got some pictures by taking them through fences."

Another impressive shot from SOLDIER featured Russell standing in front of a junked aircraft carrier, lying on its side like a beached whale, amid the mountains of garbage on the windy planet. "The aircraft carrier was a real model that they sent to us," noted Morgen Trotter. Usually, really large things like that are easier to build in the computer, but on the other hand, it's a lot easier to make miniatures look dirty and realistic."

Animator Brian Ringseis created digital moving debris to add to the aircraft carrier, giving it a sense of movement that would have been very difficult

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Alien sunsets were created using real skies shot at dusk, enhanced with digital painting, combined with foreground set pieces, and CGI dust.



This old soldier is not Unforgiven.

SOLDIER

Warner Bros, in association with Morgan Creek, present a Jerry Weintraub production in association with Impact Pictures. Directed by Paul Anderson. Written by David Webb Peoples. Produced by Jerry Weintraub. Music: Joel McNeely. Cinematography (Technicolor, Panavision widescreen): David Tattersall. Editing: Martin Hunter. Production design: David L. Snyder; art direction, Tom Valentine; set designers, Susan Wesler, Daniel R. Jennings, Mick Cukurs, Richard Berger, Peter Clemens, Clare Scarpulla; set decorator, Kate Sullivan. Visual effects supervisor: Ed Jones; special visual fx and animation, Rhythm & Hues Studios; special visual fx, Matte World Digital; miniature fx, Cinema Production Services; digital compositing, Rainmaker Digital Pictures. Makeup supervisor: Steve Laporte. Costume design: Erica Edell Phillips. Sound (DOLBY digital/DTS/SDDS): Andy Wisks. Executive producers: James G. Robinson, J.J. Louise, Susan Ekins; co-producer, Jeremy Bolt 10/98, 98 mins. Rated R.

Todd.....Kurt Russell
Caine 607.....Jason Scott Lee
Sandra.....Connie Nielsen
Mace.....Sean Pertwee
Jimmy Pig.....Michael Chiklis
Church.....Gary Busey
Col Mekum.....Jason Isaacs
Noah.....Jared Thorne, Taylor Thorne



Todd (Kurt Russell) confronts the new and genetically improved soldier who replaced him, Caine 607 (Jason Scott Lee), in the climax of *SOLDIER*.

by Steve Biodrowski

Kurt Russell developed his Clint Eastwood pastiche in *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK* and *ESCAPE FROM LA*. In *SOLDIER* he brings it to the point of perfection—no longer a mere imitation but a fully realized characterization chiseled mostly from a series of reaction shots that show the character developing without his having to speak more than a dozen lines of dialogue.

This approach is appropriate since *SOLDIER* was written by David Webb Peoples, who earned an Oscar nomination for Eastwood's 1992 Best Film of the Year, *UNFORGIVEN*. Peoples is perhaps better known to genre fans for *12 MONKEYS*, *THE BLOOD OF HEROES*, and of course *BLADE RUNNER*, but his stock in trade is a fascination with tainted protagonists and outright anti-heroes—the kind of people more often seen in hard-boiled fiction (in fact, one has to look to the James Elroy adaptation *LA CONFIDENTIAL* to find a comparably corrupt group of leading men).

Fusing the anti-hero elements of *UNFORGIVEN* with science-fiction elements from *BLADE RUNNER*, Peoples has created a moving, mythic tale of an old soldier rendered obsolete. We're clearly supposed to make the *BLADE RUNNER* connection, since Russell's Todd has fought in several battles mentioned by Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) in his dying speech from that film: "...attack ships on fire off the Shoulder of

Orion...sea beams glittering in the Tannhauser Gate..." Todd, however, is not replicant, but a human being trained from birth to be an unemotional killing machine. The film is perhaps at its best (and most frightening) while portraying the ruthless indoctrination of the young soon-to-be soldiers, and the early battles scenes make it clear that Todd is not above killing helpless, innocent civilians if it means killing the enemy as well.

After Todd is replaced by a genetically superior soldier (Jason Scott Lee somehow manages to be even more dehumanized than Russell—it's hard to be such an effective villain when the ostensible hero is already so ruthless), he is discarded like useless scrap to a planet that is (unknown to his superiors) inhabited by a small community that crash landed there years ago. The story then follows the predictable paces, as Todd's latent humanity is rekindled by these kind-hearted folk. What is amazing is the way these scenes are made to work so well by the simple tactic of keeping Todd almost silent. Without resorting to heavy-handed speeches, the film allows Russell's face to express the changes going on inside him; and viewers, forced to read those feelings rather than having them spelled out, are drawn that much more deeply into the proceedings.

Director Paul Anderson, whose previous works (*MORTAL KOMBAT*, *EVENT HORIZON*) were all empty flash, shows himself

quite capable of handling a more serious piece of action filmmaking, one that stirs up an emotional response based on the dilemmas of the characters. Unfortunately, he slips into standard action mode near the end: as Todd's replacement leads an assault on his new home, Anderson films the mayhem with colorful explosions and graceful stunt men leaping in slow motion. The effect is orchestrated to elicit a "Wow—cool!" response rather than the more appropriate "oh my god!" This is a story about how violence hurts people—both the victims and the perpetrators who have been trained to kill. It should not be staged like a Sylvester Stallone movie.

Our modern responses to the archetype of the Soldier are ambiguous: we're supposed to abhor violence; however, when threatened, we are almost eagerly to resort to it. Characters like Dirty Harry, Mike Hammer, and now Todd, perform the necessary evil to keep society safe while at the same time allowing the innocent to remain innocent. *SOLDIER* plays off these ambiguous feelings in entertaining ways, allowing Todd to redeem himself in a way that *UNFORGIVEN*'s Bill Munny never did. When Todd kills his supposedly superior opponent, he is really dispatching his doppelganger, his former self. Todd remains a Soldier, but he learns to fight not because he is following orders but because he has found something worth defending. □

FILM RATINGS

- Must see
- Excellent
- Good
- Mediocre
- Fodder for MST-3K

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY

Director: George Miller. Writers: Miller, Judy Morris, Mark Lamprell. Universal 11/98. 95 mins. G. With: James Cromwell, Magda Szubanski, Mary Stein Mickey Rooney; voices: E.G. Daily, Glennie Headly, Steven Wright.

In the opening of *BABE: PIG IN THE CITY*, the titular pig causes an accident that leaves his beloved owner, Farmer Hoggett (Cromwell), bandaged and bedridden. Soon afterward, the farm is near bankruptcy. To pay off the debts, Mrs. Hoggett (Szubanski) decides to take Babe to a state fair that's offered a handsome sum for her pig to make an appearance. All this is a ruse, really, to get the pig to the city; once there, a different, slighter story begins. Babe and Mrs. Hoggett miss their connecting flight when an irresponsible drug-sniffing dog shows off for the pig. Esme Hoggett becomes the unlikely detainee of some DEA agents. Released and relegated to the only hotel that accepts pets, Babe forgets about saving the farm and instead opens the hotel to homeless animals. When an evil neighbor reports the hotel's activities, most of the animals are taken to the pound for (one assumes) extermination. Babe saves the day by sneaking in and freeing his caged comrades. Even the most cynical among them come to regard him as benevolent, and adopt his philosophy of kindness toward all animal kind. Not to be left with an untidy ending, the hotel is rented out, and its owner and the animals return with Babe and Mrs. Hoggett to the farm. The income from the hotel is the money needed to pay back the bank. (One wonders, however, what they do about all those new mouths to feed.)

Technical credits are spectacular. Many in the key creative team from *BABE* return. Neal Scanlan and Rhythm & Hues (both visual fx Oscar winners for *BABE*) repeat their wonderful feats of animation and animatronics. Cinematographer Andrew Lesnie and production designer Roger Ford return to paint a stunning fantasy world; especially magical is the neighborhood of the Flealands Hotel. The annoying little singing mice are overused to bridge one scene to the next—the weakest link in this average sequel, which falls far short of the original in nuance, whimsy, and style. *BABE* is rich with smart social commentary intricately woven unobtrusively throughout. In the sequel, the brush strokes are less subtle and, unfortunately, less interesting. ● Sonya Burres

Not to put too fine a point on it, this loud, obnoxious misfire gives *EXORCIST II* a run for its money as the worst sequel to a great film ever made. Some good, isolated moments pop up, but the structure is sloppy and the directorial tone is completely bungled. 1/2 Steve Biodrowski

Breaks the odd numbered *TREK* curse.

STAR TREK: INSURRECTION

Paramount Pictures presents a Rick Berman production of a Jonathan Frakes film. Directed by Jonathan Frakes. Screenplay by Michael Piller, from a story by Piller & Rick Berman. Produced by Rick Berman. Music: Jerry Goldsmith. Cinematography (Panavision, widescreen): Matthew F. Leonetti, ASC. Editing: Peter E. Berger, ACE. Production design: Herman Zimmerman; art direction, Ron Wilkinson; set designer, John M. Dwyer. Makeup: Michael Westmore. Special fx supervisor: Terry Frazee; visual fx supervisors, Adam Howard, Jim Rygiel. Costume design: Sanja Milkovic Hays. Sound (Dolby Digital/DTS/SDDS): Thomas Causey. Casting: Juni Lowry-Johnson, Ron Surma. Executive producer: Martin Hornstein; associate producer, Patrick Stewart. 12/98, 100 mins. Rated PG.

Picard.....	Patrick Stewart
Riker.....	Jonathan Frakes
Data.....	Brent Spiner
Geordi.....	Levar Burton
Worf.....	Michael Dorn
Dr. Crusher.....	Gates McFadden
Troi.....	Marina Sirtis
Ru'afu.....	F. Murray Abraham
Anij.....	Donna Murphy
Dougherty.....	Anthony Zerbe



Picard and Geordi on the Enterprise. Geordi's mechanical eyes are abandoned in the new film thanks to the rejuvenating powers surrounding an embattled planet.

by Steve Biodrowski

By now, viewers know better than to expect good science-fiction from STAR TREK films. The franchise has long since reached the level where the selling point is not to "go where no one has gone before" but to put familiar characters through familiar paces, preferably by reviving some villain or other concept from the small screen. So it is a pleasant surprise to see that STAR TREK: INSURRECTION makes an admirable attempt to stand on its own as a self-contained movie. Sure, there are continuity references to DEEP SPACE NINE, but you don't have to be up-to-date on the latest episodes to follow the plot; in fact, you don't have to watch the series at all.

The basic premise—a planet blessed with a fountain of youth—is not original; certainly, the classic TREK visited its share of paradise planets, but thankfully there are no references to any of these episodes. Instead, the idea is used to launch a story in which Picard finds the ideals of the Federation being undermined from within. The result is an engaging, entertaining adventure that provides plenty of action and excitement without resorting to the HELL-RAISER-type horror elements used to enliven the previous big-screen entry, FIRST CONTACT.

Along the way, the cast is surprisingly well served. One of the big problems of the films has always been what to do with all the regular characters while still introducing some guest stars and new villains. Michael Piller deftly

solves the problem by making the screen time count, in neat little scenes that tickle audience expectations (as when the youthfully rejuvenated Riker and Troi rekindle their long-dormant romance).

Frakes, meanwhile, does a solid job as director. The film has fewer set pieces than FIRST CONTACT to show off any spectacular visuals, but he keeps the story moving and even pulls off a few poignantly poetic moments, as when Picard's love interest, Anij (Donna Murphy) teaches him to enjoy a perfect moment, wherein time seems to slow down, as evidence by the blurred wings of a hummingbird suddenly clearly visible in slow motion.

Unfortunately, this romance is one of the few weak points in the film (others include the videogame joystick Riker uses to manually pilot the Enterprise and a holodeck supposedly large enough to surreptitiously transport an entire village that turns out to be exactly the size of a ship's bridge). Apparently, more was in the original cut to invest emotional substance in the love story, but it was trimmed down after test screenings. This may be an example of actually slowing the pace down by cutting, leaving the remaining footage without the necessary grounding to make it compelling.

Also altered is the film's conclusion. No longer does Ru'afu undergo a youthful regression that takes him past childhood to an embryonic stage; instead, he blows up in a space ship—a fiery climax

that is a tad too typical. Fortunately, F. Murray Abraham's performance remains otherwise intact, and he is an effectively malevolent force, even under all the make-up. Even more important, he is in control of his deviousness so that one believes he could gain the cooperation of the Federation's Admiral Dougherty—a fine performance from Anthony Zerbe, who avoids sinking into outright villainy while clearing portraying a man willing to make moral compromises. One exchange between them is priceless: Ru'afu, who wants to prevent the Enterprise from contacting Starfleet, says, "I could send a ship to"—long pause for the right euphemism—"escort them back." The look in Dougherty's eyes clearly shows he knows just what he is agreeing to.

Perhaps most important of all, INSURRECTION establishes a sense of something worthwhile at risk that is worth defending (unlike the foolish GENERATIONS with its off-screen and unseen populations threatened by a kid's science project rocket). So when the shooting starts, it is not mere gratuitous violence but an expression of solid dramatic conflict. Frakes and production designer Herman Zimmerman's vision of the bucolic Ba'ku village may straddle cliché, but the film brings this cliché to life in a way that makes us believe the Enterprise crew would risk everything to defend it. Thus, the film captures the idealism of STAR TREK in a way seldom seen on the big screen. □

LASERBLAST: "City of Angels"

By Dennis Fischer

CITY OF ANGELS is a remake of Wim Wenders' WINGS OF DESIRE, which told the story of how a remote angel observer falls in love with a human being. Wenders' film was filled with still, black & white images of a cold and impersonal Berlin which contrasts with the more colorful and lively world of the mortals. Director Brad Silberling's remake resets the movie in Los Angeles, and darn if it doesn't become more Hollywood in the process, an odd combination of a commercial and an art film.

Apart from savoring the fine performances of Nicolas Cage as Seth and Meg Ryan as Maggie, the surgeon who fixes others' hearts but fails to attend to her own, the DVD version is a cornucopia of interesting extras. It includes two documentaries, one on the making of the film, and the other detailing the film's use of digital effects (for example, showing how footprints in the sand from the angels were digitally erased) with commentary by cinematographer John Seale. There are two separate feature length commentaries, one from director Silberling and the other from producer Charles Roven and writer Dana Stevens.

There are also two music videos, "Iris" by the Goo Goo Dolls and another by U2, as well as a music only track allowing us to hear not only Gabriel Yared's score better, but also his commentary as well as the music selections by Alanis Morissette and Peter Gabriel among others. (There is also a brief discussion about the music in the film excerpted from television interviews with Morissette and Gabriel.)

In addition, there are deleted scenes with commentaries and some commentary from production designer Lilly Kilvert. These bonuses do help one appreciate the thought and talent that went into making this romantic fantasy, but of course it is the story of Seth's love and the sacrifices he makes for it that makes it touching and memorable. □

POINTLESS REMAKES

PSYCHO

Director: Gus Van Zant. Screenplay: Joseph Stefano, from the novel by Robert Bloch. Universal 12/98, 109 mins. R. With: Vincent Vaughn, Anne Heche, Julianne Moore, Viggo Mortensen, William H. Macy.

Worthless remake of the Hitchcock classic emphasizes the strengths and weaknesses of the original: it has all of the latter and none of the former. The result is a mind-numbingly boring retread marked by the odd bit of business (e.g., Norman masturbating while looking through the keyhole at Marion Crane) intended to update the material for contemporary audiences. All we're left with is watching the

cast for the variations their performances bring on the original. Vaughn, with his nervous laugh, is a dud; Macy and Robert Forster (in the psychiatrist role) acquit themselves well. Everyone else is competent but unremarkable; no one comes close to justifying this film's existence. **0 Steve Biodrowski**

ANIMATION

A BUG'S LIFE

Directors: John Lasseter & Andrew Stanton.
Writers: Stanton and Don McEnerny & Bob Shaw.
Disney, 11/98. Rated G. Voices: Dave Foley, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Kevin Spacey, Roddy McDowall, Jonathan Harris, Phyllis Diller, Dennis Leary.

If a winner had to be announced in the "Great Bug War of '98" between DreamWorks and PDI's ANTZ and Disney and Pixar's A BUG'S LIFE, it would be very close to call indeed. But, by a nose (antennae?) the winner may just be A BUG'S LIFE.

The film is such an upbeat, colorful, sprawling adventure that its story, characters and look are infectious. With one of the strongest plots to be married to animation since his own TOY STORY, Lasseter, along with co-director Stanton, create a world that is completely inviting from frame one.

Flick (Foley), the "ant on a journey," Hopper (Spacey), the film's villainous grasshopper, the band of misfit insect circus performers and other numerous oddball creatures, are such well-conceived personalities that their "performances" are mini-marvels to watch.

Their backdrop is one of the greatest "wows" of computer technology in recent years—dandelion seeds float like giant parachutes, birds attack like Rodan and clover stands like a Redwood forest. There are also the small wonders to behold: the subtleties of sadness that register on a character's face, or the sun shining through a blade of grass like a luminescent canopy.

Best of all, A BUG'S LIFE seems to be operating on its own plane of wonderful creativity. Watching such moments as the "Bug City" (where a homeless insect holds a sign: "Kid Tore Off My Wings.") or a scene in which the insects create a bird the size of a plane to scare off the grasshoppers, brings a smile to the face, then a jolt to the mind, when one wonders how the filmmakers conjured up such original visions. And, when A BUG'S LIFE ends with animated "outtakes," played over the ending credits, you know that this is one film that not only had inspired

imagination, but it had it to spare.

●●●● Mike Lyons

SOLDIER

continued from page 58

to achieve with traditional matte painting techniques. "I added torn flags on the radar mast," said Ringseis, "as well as an anchor and a ball and chain, to give you the idea of the strength of the wind. We also added these swirling dust clouds to the scene, and we had three different layers of dust, blowing along at different speeds. It was done with a particle generation system that created random patterns for the dust. Depending on how we needed to use it, the dust could be aligned to a path and controlled, or we could just let it go and have it blown about by the wind."

Digital compositor Todd Smith helped come up with some interesting ways to integrate the dust into the shot to make it more 3-dimensional. "In the aircraft carrier shot," explained Smith, "Kurt Russell walks away from the camera into the dust clouds, and originally when I composited it you didn't get a sense of him walking through the dust. It was just pasted on top of everything. So Craig said, 'what would happen if we roto-scoped him, so we could control the level of dust.' So now, he starts out next to the camera, and as he moves away, the dust around him increases and you see him physically moving right into the dust, and slowly fading away."

Another example of 3-D effects allowed by computer enhancement occurs when Kurt Russell sees a violent wind storm approaching in the distance. "Normally, clouds move back and forth in a sort of 2-D space," said Smith, "but we were able to start with traditional 2-D elements and make them move in a more 3-D way. So through manipulation in the computer, these dust clouds come right at the camera, and blot everything out as they approach." In addition, Rhythm and Hues added a CGI dust storm to this sequence.

To create the computer lighting needed to match the digital mattes and models, Barron and his team prefer Lightscape software, because of its realistic rendering qualities. "Lightscape uses a radiosity renderer," explained Barron, "so it's different from traditional ray tracing, or scan line rendering. It's often more realistic for showing how real light would illuminate an environment. It has a different rendering scheme, where the distributed light energy exists on the computer model as a texture mesh, so once you've rendered the object, you can move it to any position. It's not viewer specific, so you can change the view on it, without re-rendering the shot. It also very accurately renders bounce light in an environment, and a lot of times, buildings and other objects have surfaces that will affect the lighting of other objects in the surrounding environment. The radiosity render engine of Lightscape accurately describes those surfaces very realistically. I'm surprised the rest of the industry doesn't use it more often. It's very exciting to use." □

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LETTERS

WHERE'S THE B-5?

At least once a year, you have an issue dedicated extensively to STAR TREK and THE X-FILES, but you seem to ignore BABYLON 5. So far you've covered only the pilot, half the first season and some minor reports. Don't you think the milestone in SF television that B5 is, deserves an extensive review, now that the show is over (maybe like your wonderful 30 YEARS OF STAR TREK double-issue, in which I found tons of information I couldn't find in a dozen "official" books)?

Robert Vogel
Germany

[We have a B5 double-issue in the works covering all seasons, with an episode guide.]

MIGHTY JOE YOUNG

My back story on MIGHTY JOE YOUNG, written in the '80s, contained errors which were corrected in my 1992 final, but weren't published. [30:11] To wit, "up on the pantheon" should have been "up in the pantheon." Joe was covered with unborn calf hide, not lamb hide. The bit about a limb being broken by dinner—hungry grips happened on KONG, not JOE. This was clarified at a late date by Ray Harryhausen and Victor Delgado. GWANGI became "GWANJI" and Merian became "Mirian" in the bold-letter quote. Your photo captions are misleading: some of those stills were done strictly as exposure tests, and do not reflect unfiled ideas. Obie wasn't "animating" Joe on the tree—it was one of a series of posed shots taken by photographer David Sutton at RKO on July 21, 1950 after Obie received his Oscar. Letting your writers see galleys and captions would do everyone a service. Readers can look forward to a 20-chapter book on the original JOE YOUNG rescheduled for a 1999 release, which celebrates its 50th anniversary.

For the record, John Fulton did not "achieve" THE INVISIBLE MAN's mechanical tricks as noted by Ms. Moir. That was the domain of Charlie Baker and wire man Bob Laszlo. The t-matte shots were done in the Frank Williams Lab to Fulton's specs. It was still experimental in 1933 and required a lot of negative retouching. According to Charlie, several shots used a blue body sock on Claude Rains when black velvet couldn't separate properly from dark clothing.

Rains' double, incidentally, was character actor Burt Mustin, who wore the sock while bumming around the Universal lot. Burt told me this long before he died. He passed out in the sock due to lack of oxygen and a stiff drink.

Paul Mandell
New York, NY

DS9'S "FAR BEYOND THE STARS"

I am disappointed by what I consider a glaring omission in your coverage of DS9's episode, "Far Beyond The Stars" [29:11] and [30:9/10]. Anna Kaplan's articles focused on the two most obvious elements: the novelty of unmasking the "mask characters," and the show's sociopolitical theme. Yes, it was fun to see several of the actors out from under the latex, but I was disappointed that roles couldn't be found for mainstays Max Grodenchik and Andy Robinson. As for the topic of '50s racism, it was a worthy subject to explore and was effectively delineated, but the treatment tended toward melodrama, especially in Benny's over-the-top climactic nervous breakdown.

What Kaplan never mentioned, is that the episode was a delightful homage to the science fiction pulps, the mother of us all. It was the humble pulps that spawned the genre of space opera and paved the way for everything from STAR TREK to *Cinefantastique*. While it was a noble goal for the episode's authors to educate younger viewers about the grim realities of pre-civil rights race relations, it was no less important to remind them that TREK is not the alpha and omega of all SF. I was delighted by the many specific references including *Galaxy* magazine, Gnome Press, Bradbury, Sturgeon, Heinlein, and Heinlein's novel *The Puppet Masters*. Colm Meany's robot-loving Albert seems to be an indirect illusion to Isaac Asimov, though the tentative, stammering Albert is quite unlike the verbose, extroverted Asimov.

I also enjoyed seeing the behind-the-scenes looks at editorial procedure such as the frequent practice of creating an illustration first, then writing the story around the provocative art. One would think that CFQ would take note of this episode's affectionate celebration of the roots of SF.

Herb Lichtenstein
Chicago, IL. 60622

CLARIFYING A.I.P.

Your retrospective of American International Pictures in the October issue was superb. Associates, I, and in the business who grew up with the company have long felt there was a need for a similar company today, one whose executives were respectful of genre films and their audiences, a qualification which the "Miramax Brothers" overhyped Dimension Films doesn't meet. Let's hope the promised second half of the retrospective doesn't share the fate of the second half of your Ray Harryhausen biography of 20 years ago.

A caveat and two corrections: somehow overlooked was AIP's most ambitious film of its first decade, MASTER OF THE WORLD (1961). It had a highly literate script of obvious borrowings from Disney's 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, noteworthy in dealing with changing class attitudes from European ideals of honor, to more pragmatic American ones in the relationship between the erstwhile "heroes," good characterizations and performances not only from Vincent Price and Henry Hull, but also Charles Bronson moving up from the rank of villain to rugged hero status; it was even shown with stereophonic sound in key first run engagements. Unfortunately it was undone by Jim Nicholson's unwillingness to spend the extra money for visual effects equal to Daniel Haller's usual superb production design, according to the late Gene Warren, who was in charge of those effects and was embarrassed by the end result.

The authors were apparently confused by the specifics of the Superscope process in which DAY THE WORLD ENDED was released. It is actually the initial version of the current Super 35 technique so beloved by his hypocritical highness, the king of the world. Original photography is done in the standard manner with important action kept within an area comparable to the "Scope" frame. This area is extracted and squeezed optically in the lab to produce a dupe negative from which CinemaScope compatible release prints can be made. AIP revived the technique in 1958 as Superama for THE BONNIE PARKER STORY, MACHINE GUN KELLY, and TEENAGE CAVEMAN and Hammer used it for films advertised as

being in Hammerscope or Megascope including TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL, which AIP released in the U.S. as HOUSE OF FRIGHT.

AIP may have been the first company to release two new genre films in a package, but the practice goes back at least to 1938, when Universal re-issued FRANKENSTEIN and DRACULA this way. In subsequent years, according to exhibitor magazines of the times, a number of old films were re-released in packages by all the companies, including the Realart Pictures mentioned in the article. Additionally, between 1953 and 1955, Columbia and Universal occasionally released two B-pictures of different genres together though I don't know if they were sold as one picture the way AIP did. For example, IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA and TEENAGE CRIME WAVE were released as a package in 1955. Of course, once AIP proved successful at packaging two similar films, all the other studios jumped on the bandwagon. AIP would continue to release its lesser films in combination packages until the mid-sixties.

Rick Mitchell
Los Angeles, CA 90036

CARPENTER WEBSITE

I greatly appreciate you featuring my site in your coverage of John Carpenter's VAMPIRES [30:7/8]. The URL of my web page was wrong in the article. The "Carpenticized" Side of the web can be reached at <http://www.geocities.com/hollywood/academy/9412/index.html>

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